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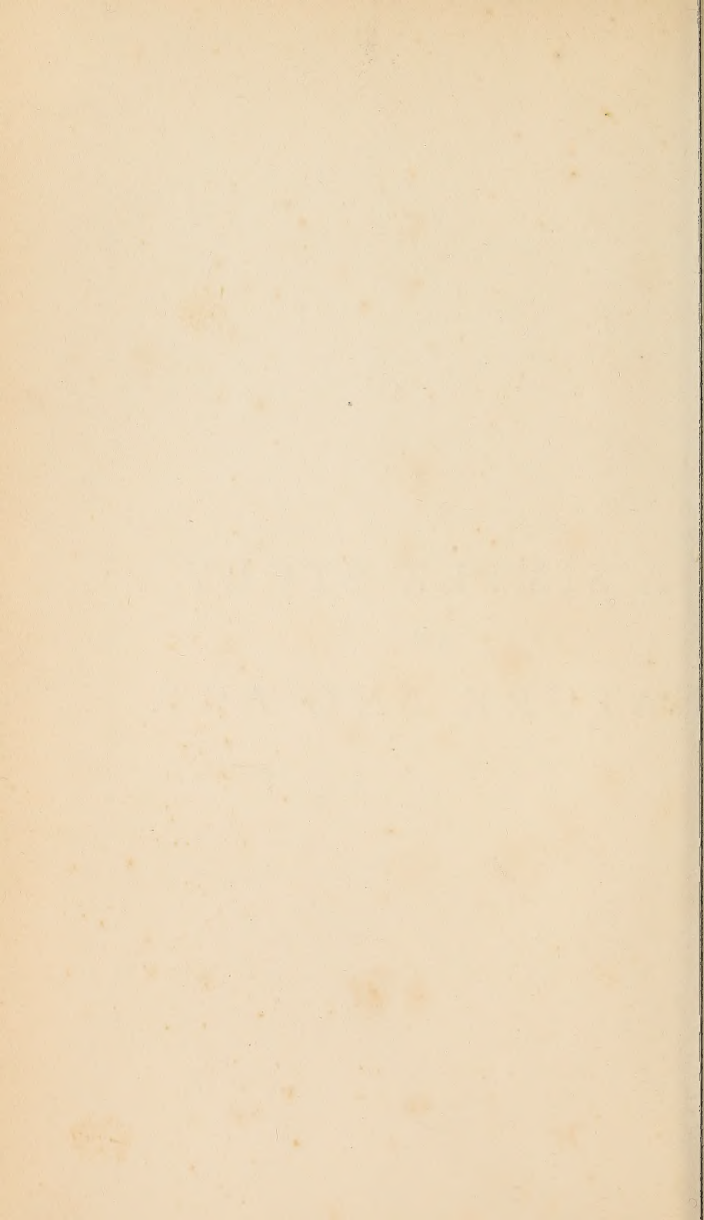






A SIMPLE STORY  
AND  
NATURE AND ART.














M<sup>RS</sup> INCHBALD.

ETCHED BY WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.









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A SIMPLE STORY  
AND  
NATURE AND ART

BY  
MRS. INCHBALD.

WITH A PORTRAIT AND INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR

BY  
WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

LONDON:  
THOS. DE LA RUE & CO.  
110, BUNHILL ROW.

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1880.



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## INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.

THE authoress of one permanently successful novel writes from her own experiences ; she writes, it may be, with difficulty, but with enthusiasm ; she is her own model ; and if we analyze her own character as well as that of her heroine, we shall find they have a sisterly resemblance. She pets her heroine, or pities her, as she would be petted or pitied herself : the peculiarities or the passions that contributed to her own happiness or misery are the ruling motives in her story, however sensational its termination may be.

Materials for an account of the life of this celebrated lady are ample. Mr. Boaden's "Memoir," in two volumes, published in 1833, twelve years after her death, was prepared from Mrs. Inchbald's autograph Journals, "kept regularly during a period of fifty years," and contains at least 200 familiar letters written by her, printed from the originals in the possession of Mrs. Phillips, her executor. During the later years of her life she compiled for publication her own "Memoirs," in four volumes, the manuscript of which various publishers



competed for, although they had not been suffered to peruse it; Robinson and Co., as well as Phillips, having offered her a thousand pounds for the copyright. She fluctuated much under these offers. Her intimate friends gave her their advice with various degrees of sincerity; but, from a reluctance to give pain, she came to no conclusion, and finally destroyed the work, by the advice of Dr. Poynter (no doubt her confessor), as Mr. Boaden learned from the following mem. in her Journal, entered, as he says, "in her firmest handwriting":—

"QUERY—What I should wish done at the point of death.

"DR. P.—Do it now. The four volumes destroyed."

Elizabeth Simpson, afterwards Inchbald, was born on the 15th of October, 1753, at Standingfield, near Bury St. Edmund's, in Suffolk, the youngest but one of many children, her father being John Simpson, farmer, of the steading so called, and her mother, Mary, whose maiden name was Rushbrook, both Roman Catholics, and respectably connected. The farm was of moderate size, and does not appear to have been very remunerative, Mrs. Simpson having a struggle to make both ends meet after her husband died in 1761, when Elizabeth was but eight years old. Families of the mediæval form of faith, who are said to have abounded in that part of the country, held together in those days, so that those in a higher position visited the farmer's widow on equal terms: even the Duchess of Norfolk appearing in the circle, by letter at least. The habits of the Simpsons, mother and married sisters included, were of a gay and amusement-loving description; the girls were local



beauties too, and when Elizabeth grew to womanhood she was accounted the handsomest, only she had a defect in her utterance that made her shy of conversation. They all used to frequent the fairs and the theatre at Bury, where a household of cousins resided. These theatrical performances, which must have been rather humble from an artistic point of view, and were lighted by the tallow candle, made George, her brother, a year older than herself, an actor, and inspired Elizabeth, at fifteen, with the same determination, from which she never swerved. Quick in acquiring whatever she determined to learn, and energetic in a degree quite unique among girls, at that time at least, she wrote out all the words most difficult to her voice, and practised them continually; besides, she soon found that declamation was much easier to her than ordinary talk,—a dangerous discovery we would say for an actress, tending to give her an inflated style of delivery. This brother George was, on the other hand, a slow youth. He turns up in the course of their theatrical peregrinations frequently, but never with very good result. She speaks of him and of herself in this way:—“It is astonishing how much girls are inclined to literature to what boys are. My brother went to school for seven years, and never could spell. I and two of my sisters, though we never were taught, could spell from our infancy.” This phrase, “never were taught,” is all we know of her education.

The success, as she esteemed it, of her brother, although so much less clever than herself, set Elizabeth planning how to emancipate herself from home and its dreary cares. The mother of the family appears to have



let the children do very much as they liked. Possibly she was not the ideal housewife,

“Die züchtige hausfrau,  
Mit fleissigen hände,”

as the circumstances of the farm did not improve, although some little aid must have reached Elizabeth when in her greatest want at Brighton or Canterbury many years after. At all events, the daughter secretly, at sixteen years of age, had made up her mind to take her own way and follow her fortune. To her childish view of life and love of admiration, the stage was her ideal.

Her first effort was to move the manager of the Norwich theatre, a Welshman of the name of Griffiths, who kept her secret and gave her some encouragement. This elated her so much, she writes of him in her pocket-book in the wildest childish delight. The name “Richard Griffiths” appears there in painted capitals, followed by the words,—

“Each dear letter of thy name is harmony.”

What love alone prompts in other girls, the desire for success inspired in her. But this did not last long: he had ventured on her brother, and perhaps was not encouraged by that specimen of the family. She now disappeared from home. She and her sisters often appear to have done so on visits to Bury; but she took a longer journey, and stepped out of the Norwich fly on the pavement of Holborn. In the metropolis she had



married sisters, but she did not go near them. She rather enjoyed the dangerous independence of walking about and losing herself unprotectedly in the crowd; but the account of this escapade is left purposely vague in the record we follow. She returns home without having been missed; and the various juvenile attempts to interest Griffiths and others recommence. At eighteen we find she takes a more ordinary course: she visits her sisters in London, and at the home of one of them she meets Joseph Inchbald, an actor approaching middle life, who of course admires the beauty and enthusiasm of the interesting girl. They met daily; but he had no influence to get her forward, and then had to leave for an engagement at Birmingham, when Elizabeth again returned home, more resolved than ever to be her own mistress. The wild attempts she renewed on the obdurate Griffiths are now a little amusing. But we must pass over these and hasten to the final act of abandoning home and its inmates, generally so unspeakably dear to us all, but most so to the feminine nature.

On the 10th of April, (no year given, but from other evidence we arrive at the conclusion it was in 1772,) when eighteen and a-half years old, she packed up her properties in a bandbox she could carry, and left this letter in her bedroom, addressed to her mother:—

“By the time you receive this I shall have left Standingfield, perhaps for ever. You are surprised, but be not uneasy:—believe the step I have taken, however indiscreet, is in no way criminal; unless I sin by not acquainting you with it, which was impossible for me to do, though strongly pressed by the desire of giving you a personal farewell. I now endure every pang—one not lost to every feeling must—on thus quitting the tenderest and best of



parents ; I would say most beloved too, but cannot prove my affection ;—yet time may ;—to that I must submit my hope of regaining your regard.

“The censure of the world I despise : as the most worthy incur the reproaches of *that*. Should I ever think you wish to hear from me, I will write.”

This singular document it would be difficult to characterise, nor should we try to do so, without a more complete understanding of her mother's character. She arrives in London in the grey of the morning, and takes up her abode at the Rose and Crown, St. John Street : with what funds we should like to learn, but that nowhere appears. She would not place herself in the hands of her sisters ; that procedure had failed before, but there was one friend she would trust, whom she sallied out to find. This friend had left town ; she observes people looking round at her and following her in the street ; she returns to the inn, and there the inmates act in a way that frightens her ; she changes her lodgings for the worse, and becomes nervous. She was actually ten days in town, sometimes locked up by distracted landladies, and sometimes wandering in want of a place wherein to hide, insulted at theatres, and questioned by strangers. This dreadful time, which at last took down her daring self-dependence, and was dressed up romantically by magazine writers after her death, was brought to a close, with all its “strange adventures,” as she calls them herself, by her brother-in-law, Slender, lighting upon her in a pennyless state, and finding she had at last written to her sister. Inchbald was in London again at this time, and, being a friend of brother Slender, saw her daily as before ; till one evening, the 9th of June, 1772, a



Roman Catholic priest called, apparently by accident, and married them on the spot. Next day they were re-married in the parish church. In the evening the family party all went to see the bridegroom act Oakley in "The Jealous Wife," George Colman's comedy, and next day again they were rumbling along in the Bristol coach, at which city he had an engagement. Now, at last, she was sure to step upon the boards and enchant the world !

At first she was ambitious, or her husband for her. She made her *début* on the 4th September as Cordelia to his Lear.

From this period for about ten years her life is full of vicissitudes. The multitudinous expenses of theatrical management prevented the regular staff being decently well paid, whatever stars might be ; and though there were about as many country "play-houses" as now exist, they were smaller, and actors of moderate ability, according to the estimate of the time, more numerous. In a few weeks we find the pair back in town ; but nothing could be done there, and they take ship to Leith, the Edinburgh stage being then, as now, an honourable one for the successful actor. The transit between Edinburgh and London was carried on by a fast-sailing and handsome set of vessels called Leith smacks ; but the pleasure of the voyage was sometimes converted into prolonged torture by contrary winds. The writer himself, when a boy, lived two weeks and two days (sixteen days and nights) in one of these smacks, to accomplish the distance now traversed in ten hours. Mrs. Inchbald, whose first voyage this was, suffered



sadly; but much worse is the account we have of a subsequent intended voyage to Aberdeen, when the vessel had to seek refuge in Fifeshire, and all the *troupe*, the Inchbalds and their companions, not being able to hire any other means of proceeding, actually tried to walk to Aberdeen! Tired to death, sometimes "getting a lift" in a farmer's cart or waggon, and again walking, these Thespians worked their way along the dreary northern coast to the end of their journey.

To return to Edinburgh: Mrs. Inchbald's first appearance there was in "Jane Shore," which was well received, and became a favourite character with her. She was, in truth, most indefatigable in meeting the requirements of managers. We have a list of her parts for a period of five weeks, (in Aberdeen, I believe, where the house was open only on alternate nights, and where fresh attraction was constantly necessary,) shewing that she took a new *rôle* every time she appeared. Here is the programme of the opening six nights of her engagement, which will give the reader a criterion whereby to judge of her position and industry:—

- August 12th—Louisa Dudley, in "West Indian."
- „ 18th—Witch, in "Macbeth."
- „ 23rd—Juliet, in "Romeo and Juliet."
- „ 26th—Jane Shore, in "Jane Shore."
- „ 28th—Anne Boleyn, in "Henry VIII."
- „ 31st—Clarissa, in "All in the Wrong."

Again and again we find the Inchbalds in Edinburgh, acting her favourite parts with considerable applause. But her success on the boards of the Scottish capital was not



her only triumph there: she was admired off the stage by sundry men who were not deterred by the neighbourhood of her husband. We say neighbourhood, because by this time she had found her precipitate marriage had not lifted her into Paradise. She saw cause to suppose him unfaithful to the marriage vows, and he retorted by accusing her of apathy. Still, of all men the actor was to her the pleasantest companion, and thus the most dangerous of her admirers was Mr. Sterling, who played Iago to her husband's Othello—an unhappy professional association! After violent recriminations, she insisted on their sleeping in separate chambers, and applied to the priest for advice. Coquette as she has been called, we find her over and over again applying to her spiritual director, on occasions which must have amused as well as consoled her, being predetermined on the virtuous side before the application. It appears to me, from a careful reading of her words whenever they appear, and by a consideration of her whole history and character, that she never was in danger either from the brutal top-booted woman-hunter not then extinct, who might have gold in his purse, or from the more amusing, if equally selfish, man on town. The apathy her husband complained of was a *garde d'honneur* more powerful than coat of mail, or the occasional advice even of a confessor. They now lived separately; but the Edinburgh audience has always been impatient and inquisitive about actors off the stage, and Inchbald incurred their dislike. Perhaps the two gentlemen performing Iago and Othello, and Mrs. Inchbald Jane Shore, was too much for the gossiping public, and no wonder! The state of feeling



burst into a riot, and Inchbald was driven from the stage.

This reconciled them. They had both imbibed the notion that a visit to Paris might be remunerative, or, at least, they wilfully persuaded themselves into that belief. She had been studying French, and he had been assiduously practising painting. He would paint and she would write, a scheme so absurd, on the part of both, that all her biographers are lost in seeking for an explanation. They had no pictures to take with them, and we may say that neither of them could either paint or write, considering the language had never yet been spoken by them. They crossed to St. Valleri (we give the name as in all former accounts) in a Shields vessel, most likely a coal-ship, and arrived in Paris to find themselves in a few weeks under the necessity of returning to England for want of funds!

They landed at Brighton (19th September, 1776) with an exhausted exchequer,—so much so that we learn from her own record they were literally without bread. They had made friends on board the packet. She always made friends in whatever position in life she happened to be placed, which implies an elasticity of temperament equal to all occasions. These entertained them to some small extent; but it has been said that a raw turnip, eaten wandering in the fields, was their only dinner at last; nor do we know how they got to London, nor how, except by friendly aid, they shortly arrived at Chester, where a manager employed them both. This return from Paris, where their little savings were lost in a desperate adventure, and where considerable funds united



with accomplished art as painter or *littérateur* on the part of either, would have been probably equally unavailing, was the lowest point touched by Mrs. Inchbald in her eight or ten years of provincial actress's life, though they were not much more comfortable at Canterbury a year later. At Liverpool they met with a liberal engagement from Younger, then manager of that rather important theatre. Here they remained for some months, a long time to be stationary, and then moved on to Manchester, where, on the 18th January, 1777, they had the good fortune to meet the Siddonses, and a still more important person—J. P. Kemble.

Kemble and his sister, soon to take the first places on the English stage, and to leave all others leagues behind in popularity, were at that moment equally obscure with our heroine and her husband. But Kemble's dignity of manner, his great talents, and his education, left little doubt as to his asserting his position when his chance should come, while the commanding power and personality of Mrs. Siddons, "the queen of tears, now singing over her household labour," left as little doubt as to her ultimate success. The two parties lived together, Kemble taking the warmest friendly interest in Mrs. Inchbald, while Inchbald himself was happy painting in Mrs. Siddons' apartment. This interval of peace continued when they went to York, and they again took lodgings together at Birmingham. Mrs. Inchbald now used to read her parts with Kemble; and he it was, about this time, first advised her to think of writing a novel. Unhappily the performances at Birmingham, under the management of Mattocks, were stopped by the magistrates for some unexplained



reason. The Siddonses and Kemble left for a circuit, and the Inchbalds, thrown wholly into each other's society, renewed their former feud, and fell once more into direful difficulties.

Next year we find Kemble writing to our heroine, and telling her, among other news, "My tragedy has long been finished—long in Mr. Harris's hands, who sent it back to me a month ago unopened, with an assurance that "*it would not do.*" To this she replies that she is privately writing the "Simple Story."

This tragedy was brought out at Hull, the author playing his own hero, "Belisarius," Mrs. Inchbald acting in it as well, and speaking the Epilogue. All of them were rising in public esteem to a certain degree, that is to say, as country actors known and expected in the York circuit; but neither then nor at the present day would any provincial success carry a player very high in the profession, so that the magnificent declamation of Kemble, and the heart-rending pathos of Mrs. Siddons, or more lately the naturalism of Edmund Kean, were for years wasted before audiences who either could not or did not venture to appreciate. But a crisis was approaching for Mrs. Inchbald.

On the 4th June, 1779, when they were all at Leeds, an excursion, combining pleasure and profit, was planned. The whole troop, in high spirits, went to Halifax, Inchbald on horseback, and all in splendour. In the evening they entertained the natives successfully, and next day returned as they came. All appeared well, and now another night settled them to their work at Leeds, when Inchbald died without warning, and in a manner, then



and now, in want of explanation. Boaden's account, with the Journal of the widow before him, is altogether inexplicable. "In consequence of some accident," he says; and again, "probably an affection of the heart, which, as his lady does not state it, we shall avoid the current rumour, and give her own words:—'The day was a day of horror, and the week following a week of grief, horror, and despair.'" Neither in the "Memoir of Kemble," published in 1825, nor in the "Life of Mrs. Siddons," by the poet Campbell, do we find the least hint of an explanation regarding this sudden death. When Mrs. Inchbald destroyed her own "Memoir," the opening chapter of the fourth volume of which was a "Description of the Death," Boaden himself says:—"We regret the loss of this particularly, for reasons which need not be too plainly mentioned. She had a perfect knowledge of the subject: ours is comparatively imperfect. She might have hit upon the exact terms in which it was possible to talk about it." The Leeds *troupe* gave her a benefit, and Kemble consoled himself by writing epitaphs and an ode, "a blank ode," as it is ominously called, in imitation of Collins' "Ode to Evening;" and thus ended, at little more than twenty-five and a-half, when so many women, as well as men, have just begun the most serious business of life, the hardships and the vicissitudes of Mrs. Inchbald's career.

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We have been somewhat particular in recording the history of those years, her years of married life and provincial acting on many stages, because in the expe-



riences of that period the girl who entered upon them with absolutely no education, acquired a very prudential knowledge of the world, and an independence of all attachments and advice, so essential to weaker natures. In future, moreover, the picturesque Bohemianism is lost, the romance flattened down, so that it will not be worth while to dwell on future records of the same kind of incidents as those already noted. She had already begun, it appears, to invest in the funds. We are told, "When Mr. Inchbald died, her circumstances were what are commonly called good, and for a player, perhaps, extraordinary. She had £222 Long Annuities, £30 in Consols, and 5s. 3d. in the Reduced Annuities, besides £128 12s. 6d. in hand." A statement so extraordinary as this, which we must accept as a calculation of dividends, not three years after an exhausted exchequer had cut short their residence in Paris, and the semi-starvation in Brighton, is altogether beyond belief. Is the statement a mistake in point of time, and does it only refer to the last years of her life, as it is made to do by the author of the Memoir prefixed to Mr. Bentley's edition of 1833? Or had she been making up a private fund during all her married life, like Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, a fund, it may be, in self-protection against an improvident husband, with at least one illegitimate child who accompanied them? Mr. Boaden's statement, with her Journal and all other documents before him, is so explicit that we must suppose some such scheme had existed, were it not impossible, even on such a supposition, to believe she could save, out of the miserable salaries they received, a sum approaching five thousand



pounds. Penurious to a degree all her life, spending nothing on dress,—some very handsome women think they don't require to do so,—careless about her food, sitting without a fire in winter when in receipt of from five to nine hundred pounds for a new play, her will at the end of all does not show that she was much richer at her death than this account would indicate at the time the Leeds company gave her a benefit to assist her on the death of her husband,—a provincial benefit at this time producing about fifteen pounds!

Having stated this problem, and left it to the reader, we follow her further fortunes. She continued to act with the York company under the new management of Cummings. The "Simple Story" was now finished and submitted to Kemble and others. Of the tragedian's opinion of it we have no record, but we find various entries in her Journal about this time of possibly more interest to her. Offers of love of various kinds she has, one from Dick Suett, whose proposal of marriage she rejects, interspersed with remonstrances on her imprudence, imaginary on his part, from Kemble, who continued to shew so great an interest in her well-being that she was in hopes he would himself propose. She says, "I would have jumped to have him;" but he never advanced, and we are pretty safe in saying that the woman to whom absolute independence was necessary would never have harmonised with the pompous and arbitrary Kemble, whom she had acuteness enough to describe as her hero Dorriforth. Marriage was not necessary to her, and she had the sense to see this, so that no disappointment resulted. Dr. Brodie, too, she was,



in her way, in love with, but nothing came of it. This gentleman was on his transit to London to begin practice, and it was to him she afterwards sent her "Simple Story," in manuscript, with a view to publication. Its reception by the booksellers was a repetition of the old story. Stockdale and others could see nothing in it, and after months of anxious correspondence the MS. came back to her, to lie in her desk for about fourteen years, when her farces had established her fame, and she was independent of the results. Publishers then could see its merits!

We now find her again in Edinburgh, where she remained still a favourite in the recollection of the people, and where both her *rôle* of Jane Shore and the persevering Mr. Sterling again attract attention. As before, too, we hear of attendance at mass and an appeal to a confessor entering dramatically on the scene.

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players!"

she must have said to herself a thousand times in the course of her intrigues and love affairs, which invariably ended like the witches in "Macbeth;" "And what seemed corporal melted as breath into the wind." She was still connected with the York company, but determined to try her fortunes in London. Thither she repaired in September, 1780. The redoubtable Harris was still master of the situation at Covent Garden, but he looked at her with approving eye, and she made her *début* there, without sound of trumpets, on the 3rd of October, as Bellario in "Philaster." We are afraid that a shapely figure



and a handsome face were the main attractions to this Harris, who was disappointed with her in another respect, swearing she was determined upon virtue and a garret! This character Bellario, we must remember, is a lady Euphrasia in the disguise of a page, and her salary was so small that she added to it by going on in the pantomime; or rather, as the Memoir of 1833 says, "She was not borne away from the train of Harlequin. She was loth to suffer the deduction of 10s. per week by keeping out of the band of enchanted or enchanting ladies who frequent Persian temples, virgins of the sun, or the moon, if she condescends to shine upon pantomime masquerades." However, as we learn that her lodgings in Edinburgh, where she had been accused of living freely, cost only 8s., and now in London 9s., we see how it was possible for her to go on with her saving system, laying the foundation of the fortune she, happily for her sisters, whom she was ever ready to serve, now rapidly accumulated.

By this time she had written many farces and a comedy or two, but could get no attention drawn to them. Harris had no desire to avert his prophecy of virtue and a garret, and George Colman, with whom she was now acquainted, and whose country house was open to her with its pleasant society, could not find time to read them. Her comedy lay in his drawer while she made her last excursion as an actress, going to Ireland when Kemble was also there. In Dublin she opened with Bellario, at a salary of £2 3s. a-week, out of which she paid 22s. 9d. for board and lodging. This went on for some



months, till Daly, the manager, who is described plainly as "a brute," made himself so offensive to her, that she resented the insult so vociferously he was scared into buying up her benefit and letting her go. The "brute" sent the guineas by the hand of Kemble, and she took them, thus ending the last of her acting tours, and returning to town in May, 1783.

At this time Montgolfier and balloons were the talk of the town, when a farce, called "A Mogul Tale ; or, the Descent of the Balloon," was placed in Colman's hand as the work of a Mrs. Woodley, whose handwriting, he declared, was the worst he had ever encountered. The title and the Montgolfier talk made him read and adopt it at once. Mrs. Inchbald was one of the Haymarket company at the time, and acted in her own piece. The success was immense ; she pocketed £100 very easily, and reminded Colman that he had a comedy by her in his desk he had never read. "I'll go and read it at once !" was his rejoinder ; and at once, too, he put it in rehearsal, pressing her to his heart with effusion. His enthusiasm was shared by Bannister, Palmer, and Miss Farren ; and the result was a greater success than that of the slighter "Mogul's Tale." "Dear Madam," he writes her, "the licencer wants a title for your play. I have thought of a whimsical one that I think will not displease you, and if you will favour me with a call about eleven in the forenoon—'I'll Tell you What !'—Yours, G. C."

To this absurd title she could not object, because he had undertaken to write the Prologue and Epilogue, and the effect on the public was all that could be desired.



She soon received £300 from this comedy and a pound a-week addition to her salary; she soon, moreover, gave up acting, devoted herself by day to composition, and in the evening to enjoying the fashionable life that opened to her. When not engaged in this way, she used to frequent the theatre, and sometimes might be seen sitting in the pit, but more frequently going from box to box among her new friends, of whom the Marquis of Abercorn and Lord Charles Bentinck were among the chief.

Every year now brought her greater success: her Comedy, "Such Things Are," brought her in £900, and "Every one has his Fault," £700. This last is said to "be, perhaps, her best dramatic work."\* Even the wiseacre Harris, of Covent Garden, who prophesied virtue and a garret for her, had to knuckle under at last, and give her £500 for an adaptation from the German, called the "Wise Men of the East." Let us give a list of her entire works for the stage, twenty in number, running from 1784 to 1805:—

"A Mogul Tale."—1784.

"I'll Tell you What."—1785-6.

"The Widow's Vow."—1786.

"All on a Summer's Day."—1787.

Then three adaptations from the French, called "Animal Magnetism," "The Midnight Hour," and "The Child

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\* By a writer in *Temple Bar Magazine*, April, 1879. The article in question, "Elizabeth Inchbald," is exceedingly well done and highly interesting.



of Nature," followed same year by "Such Things Are," which, night after night, filled old Covent Garden to the ceiling :—

"Married Men."—1789.

"The Hue and Cry."

"Next Door Neighbours."

"Young Men and Old Women."

"Every one has his Fault."—1793.

"The Wedding Day."—1794.

"Wives as they were, and Maids as they are."—1797.

After this she tried the German, Kotzebue being a fashionable author at the time, her next two plays, "Lovers' Vows," and "The Wise Men of the East," were from his originals, and were brought out in 1798–9. After which "To Marry or Not to Marry," appeared in 1805, and "The Massacre," a tragedy, with "Care of Conscience," complete the list.

The two last-named may be read in Boaden's Memoir, but the majority of the others are in "The Modern Theatre," 1811, "The British Theatre," 1824, or in "Farces and After pieces," 1815, the first and last collections being edited by Mrs. Inchbald herself.

In the midst of this success she bethought her of the "Simple Story," so long lying as if worthless in her desk. She brought it out, re-wrote it, and offered it to Robinson, who at once gave her the sum she wanted for it, viz., £200. A few days after its first publication a new edition was called for, and this was followed by a third at an interval not much greater.

This was in 1791 when she was touching upon her thirty-ninth birthday, and was welcomed in the most



fashionable society of the season, but when her Journal was beginning to record a suspicion that time was impairing the beauty she had always found her most dear and prized possession. We should like to know how much the re-writing had altered the story, and still more, whether the character of Dorriforth had undergone any development, now that Kemble had become to her only one of many friends all hopeless as husbands.

As to herself, still pretty, more piquant than ever, and more pious, with acknowledged talents, and ready social powers to make all other women jealous, a Bohemian who wanted nothing, but still lived in her garret with virtue, on little more than twenty shillings a week, but also with long annuities that enabled her to assist all her family; affectionate in nature, without passion, wholly feminine, she was amiable and lovable in an extraordinary degree. Great in friendship, too, and greedy of money, and of admiration, but independent of love, even more than when her husband accused her of apathy.

Pretty we have called her, but, according to the taste of her own time, more than that, lovely; we wonder the greatest painters of her day did not find her out, and immortalize her on canvas like Lady Hamilton. Piquant, because her powers of mind were ready and quick, with something of the amusing satire that goes so well with the farce; she was provokingly unassailable in her self-consulting line of action, and used to draw her chair into the middle of a room, surrounded by the men, to the neglect of all other feminine attractions. Pious, in a Roman-catholic way, religion hanging like a mantle



upon the shoulders, which she could transfer pleasantly to the priest, as she might resign her shawl to the hand of Dr. Gisborne; a womanly and amusing sort of religion merely. Bohemian, but of that kind only that made her careless of all the minor appliances of life, her want of passion, and passivity of temper, keeping her a purist in morals, though living constantly on the confines of forbidden ground. Mr. Von Holst, a painter of nearly half-a-century ago, painted "The Virgin Mary Dancing with the Devil on the verge of the World;"—to the pure all things are pure, and why should we not amuse ourselves with associations that cannot taint us? Yet, if the reader will turn to the Preface to the first edition to the "Simple Story," he will see that she disavows altogether all the attractions of the Stage, and speaks as if Destiny, and not her will and her ambition, had led her to the footlights. When Kemble warned her against a female friend whose character was gone, even for the green-room of that day, she assured him of her safety from contagion. Men had made impertinent love to her from her eighteenth year, she was accustomed to it: at first she threw a bason of hot water, it is said, in the face of Dodd, when she, an unprotected female of eighteen, applied to him as a manager; but later in life she only made them feel they had done what was worse than a crime,—they had committed a blunder. Now and then, indeed, she has to take the culprit by the collar and turn him out, as for instance Dr. Gisborne, who for a season took tea with her several times a week, and at last consulted her about his marriage—"Marriage, but not with *me!*" she calls out indignantly, shoving him



towards the door. He, poor man, had mistaken the apathy which was not by any means indifference to advancement. Godwin describes her as a mixture between a lady and a milkmaid, and the satirist Wolcot, addresses her :—

“Eliza, when with female art  
You seem to shun and yet pursue ;”

but the greatest mistake she ever made was to believe in Sir Charles Bunbury, and for the delusive chance of his making her Lady Bunbury, losing a rich Mr. Glover, who offered a marriage settlement of £500 a-year.

Although the success of the “Simple Story” was decidedly great, it was not followed by other novels. Eight years elapsed before “Nature and Art,” a shorter narrative of a totally different interest, appeared. No reflection from her own history and character, directly speaking, appears here : it was inspired not by experience, but by the propagandism of the times. The new views of social and political truths, those of the men at the heart of the mighty movement that had convulsed France, and must yet be formalized in Europe, had taken a scarcely well-understood shape in her mind, which impelled her to compare Natural impulses and uneducated speech, with the Artificial, highly civilized, selfish action and conversation we see about us. A dangerous line to take in England in 1796, but danger was her delight ; she loved to walk on forbidden ground, and to laugh at the long faces that would dissuade her.



It was piquant ; society had already received her ; she could laugh and argue, too, with those who read her story !

Always fond of French things from the time of that escapade in Paris, when she and her husband thought to succeed as writers and painters in spite of ignorance of language, and ignorance of painting, she seems to have been carried captive, as thousands have been, by the theories of Rousseau, and by a belief in the rectitude of human instincts, all the time remaining the most artificial of amiable women. Religion says all souls are equal, and the law tries to treat men so ; *Nature it is* that steps in and denies the possibility of their remaining so for twenty-four hours ! But the shallowest theory of our author in this tale is that all the other enjoyments of life, and of intellect, are as naught compared to those of the moral nature. She throws conscience into the scale against unscrupulous success, but she forgets that tender conscience belongs to the good only. After the death of Agnes, an ignominious death by the sentence of her former lover, now a Judge, who does not recognise her, the author says : “ Spirit of Agnes ! look down and behold all your wrongs revenged ! William feels — *Remorse !* ” But how much *remorse* would the man who had knowingly and intentionally abandoned her to wreck and ruin at twenty, be capable of feeling after twenty years successful struggle in the profession of law ?

Nevertheless the story of “ Nature and Art ” has considerable fascination ; its contrasts are enormous, yet, unhappily, within the possibilities of the game. Nothing



can be more striking than the few sentences in which she narrates the passing of the sentence :—

“The <sup>e</sup> verdict was Guilty.

“She heard it with composure.

“But when the Judge placed the fatal velvet on his head, retreating a step or two back, and lifting her hands, with a scream, she exclaimed—

“‘Oh, not from you!’

“The piercing shriek which accompanied those words prevented their being heard.

“Serene and dignified, as if no such exclamation had been uttered, William delivered the fatal speech, ending with, dead, dead, dead.

“She fainted as he closed the period, and was carried back to prison in a swoon, while he adjourned the court to go to dinner.”

From this time, before the end of the century, the various members of her family, who had tried their fortunes adventurously like herself, had lost their way, and needed her assistance, which she was always ready to give, however penuriously she treated herself. Of her two youngest sisters, Debby had failed sadly, and approached her end in comfort only by the aid and attention of Elizabeth, on whom all expenses devolved. George, too, left his family very badly provided for, and Dolly, the youngest of all, came to be barmaid at the Staple Inn Coffee House, where Mrs. Inchbald, far from disdaining to visit her, delighted to do so, and would step out of the carriage of some of her great friends to shake hands with her, and step back again without seeing anything in the visit to be ashamed of.

About 1810 we find repeated entries in her Journal that she fears her beauty is going, and then she begins to deny herself to visitors, to stay at home, and to



be sadly depressed, employed in writing, and afterwards destroying, her Memoir, and her wills, and at last dies quietly on the 1st of August, 1821, and is buried in the churchyard of Kensington.

Her last will leaves bequests to all her relatives ; and to "the person calling himself Robert Inchbald," the illegitimate son of her late husband, a man who had caused her much trouble, she leaves £20 a-year.

### HER PORTRAITS

are numerous, but none of them greatly distinguished. The one we have etched was a favourite, as it gives the hair dressed in the highest fashion. It was originally published in 1787, about the same size as our etching, and is described only as "Drawn with permission by Cook," as if it had been from some important picture to which Mr. Cook only had access. About this time we have her own account of herself :—

### DESCRIPTION OF ME.

Age between thirty and forty, which means a little turned of thirty.

Height above middle size, and rather tall.

Figure handsome, and striking in its general air, but a little too stiff and erect.

Shape rather too fond of sharp angles.

Skin by nature fair, though a little freckled, and with a tinge of sand, which is the colour of her eye-lashes, but made coarse by ill-treatment on her cheeks and arms.

Bosom none, or so diminutive.

Hair of a sandy auburn, and rather too straight as well as thin.

Face beautiful in effect, and beautiful in every feature.

Countenance full of spirit and sweetness ; excessively interesting, and, without indelicacy, voluptuous.

Dress always becoming ; and very seldom worth so much as eight-pence.



Her first portrait, except an attempt by her husband, was painted in Edinburgh in 1775. Afterwards, she was engraved in the character of Lady Abbess, in the "Comedy of Errors" (1785); and as Lady Jane Grey, in the play of that name (1791). A few years later she was painted by Drummond (1797), and by Lawrence, in 1807. Both of these portraits have been engraved, and several others without painters' names. In Boaden's "Memoir," for example, is a youthful portrait, a very pretty one, described only as "Engraved by Dean from an original painting."

[In preparing the present edition, the old phraseology has been adhered to, except in cases of obvious verbal or grammatical inaccuracy].

W. B. SCOTT.







# A SIMPLE STORY.

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## CHAPTER I.

DORRIFORTH, bred at St. Omer's, in all the scholastic rigour of that college, was, by education, and the solemn vows of his order, a Roman Catholic priest:—but, nicely discriminating between the philosophical and the superstitious part of that character, he adopted the former only, and possessed qualities not unworthy of the first professors of Christianity. Every virtue which it was his vocation to preach, it was his care to practise; nor was he in the class of those of the religious, who, by secluding themselves from the world, fly from the merit they might acquire in reforming mankind: he refused to shelter himself from the temptations of the layman by the walls of a cloister; but sought for and found that shelter within the centre of London, where he dwelt, in his own prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

He was about thirty, and had lived in the metropolis near five years, when a gentleman, above his own age, but with whom he had in his youth contracted a sincere friendship, died, and left him the sole guardian of his daughter, who was then eighteen.

The deceased Mr. Milner, on his approaching dissolution, perfectly sensible of his state, thus reasoned with himself



before he made the nomination :—"I have formed no intimate friendship during my whole life, except one—I can be said to know the heart of no man, except the heart of Dorriforth. After knowing his, I never sought acquaintance with another; I did not wish to lessen the exalted estimation of human nature which he had inspired. In this moment of trembling apprehension for every thought which darts across my mind, and more for every action which soon I must be called to answer for; all worldly views here thrown aside, I act as if that tribunal, before which I every moment expect to appear, were now sitting in judgment upon my purpose. The care of an only child is the great charge which in this tremendous crisis I have to execute. These earthly affections that bind me to her by custom, sympathy, or what I fondly call parental love, would direct me to consult her present happiness, and leave her to the care of those whom she thinks her dearest friends; but they are friends only in the sunshine of fortune; in the cold nipping frost of disappointment, sickness, or connubial strife, they will forsake the house of care, although the very fabric which they may have themselves erected."

Here the excruciating anguish of the father overcame that of the dying man.

"In the moment of desertion," continued he, "which I now picture to myself, where will my child find comfort? That heavenly aid which religion provides, and which now, amidst these agonizing tortures, cheers with humble hope my afflicted soul, *that* she will be denied."

It is in this place proper to remark, that Mr. Milner was a member of the church of Rome, but on his marriage with a lady of Protestant tenets, they mutually agreed their sons should be educated in the religious opinion of their father, and their daughters in that of their mother. One child only was the result of their union; the child whose future welfare



now occupied the anxious thoughts of her expiring father. From him the care of her education had been withheld, as he kept inviolate his promise to her departed mother on the article of religion, and therefore consigned his daughter to a boarding-school for Protestants, whence she returned with merely such ideas of piety as ladies of fashion, at her age, mostly imbibe. Her little heart employed in all the endless pursuits of personal accomplishments, had left her mind without one ornament, except such as nature gave; and even those accomplishments were not wholly preserved from the ravages made by Nature's rival, *Art*.

While her father was in health he beheld, with extreme delight, his accomplished daughter, without one fault which taste or elegance could have imputed to her; nor ever inquired what might be her other failings. But, cast on a bed of sickness, and upon the point of leaving her to her fate, those failings at once rushed on his thought; and all the pride, the fond enjoyment he had taken in beholding her open the ball, or delight her hearers with her wit or song, escaped his remembrance; or, not escaping it, these things were lamented with a sigh of compassion, or a contemptuous frown at such frivolous qualifications.

"Something essential," said he to himself, "must be considered; something to prepare her for an hour like this. Can I then leave her to the charge of those who themselves never remember such an hour will come? Dorriforth is the only person I know, who, uniting the moral virtues to those of religion, and pious faith to native honour, will protect without controlling, instruct without tyrannizing, comfort without flattering; and, perhaps in time, make good by choice, rather than by constraint, the tender object of his dying friend's sole care."

Dorriforth, who came post from London to visit Mr. Milner in his illness, received, a few moments before his



death, all his injunctions, and promised to fulfil them. But, in this last token of his friend's perfect esteem, he still was restrained from all authority to direct his ward in one religious opinion, contrary to those her mother had professed, and in which she herself had been educated.

"Never perplex her mind with any opinions that may disturb, but cannot reform"—were his latest words; and Dorriforth's reply gave him entire satisfaction.

Miss Milner was not with her father at this affecting period:—some delicately nervous friend, with whom she was on a visit at Bath, thought proper to conceal from her not only the danger of his death, but even his indisposition, lest it might alarm a mind she thought too susceptible. This refined tenderness gave poor Miss Milner the almost insupportable agony of hearing that her father was no more, even before she had been told he was not in health. In the bitterest anguish she flew to pay her last duty to his remains, and performed it with the truest filial love, while Dorriforth, upon important business, was obliged to return to town.



## CHAPTER II.

DORRIFORTH returned to London heavily afflicted for the loss of his friend; and yet, perhaps, with his thoughts more engaged upon the trust which that friend had reposed in him. He knew the life Miss Milner had been accustomed to lead; he dreaded the repulses his admonition might possibly meet; and feared he had undertaken a task he was too weak to execute—the protection of a young woman of fashion.

Mr. Dorriforth was nearly related to one of our first Catholic peers; his income was by no means confined, but approaching to affluence; yet such was his attention to those in poverty, and the moderation of his own desires, that he lived in all the careful plainness of economy. His habitation was in the house of a Mrs. Horton, an elderly gentlewoman, who had a maiden niece residing with her, not many years younger than herself. But although Miss Woodley was thirty-five, and in person exceedingly plain, yet she possessed such cheerfulness of temper, and such an inexhaustible fund of good nature, that she escaped not only the ridicule, but even the appellation, of an old maid.

In this house Dorriforth had lived before the death of Mr. Horton; nor upon that event had he thought it necessary, notwithstanding his religious vow of celibacy, to fly the roof of two such innocent females as Mrs. Horton and her niece. On their part, they regarded him with all



that respect and reverence which the most religious flock shews to its pastor; and his friendly society they not only esteemed a spiritual, but a temporal advantage, as the liberal stipend he allowed for his apartments and board enabled them to continue in the large and commodious house which they had occupied during the life of Mr. Horton.

Here, upon Mr. Dorriforth's return from his journey, preparations were commenced for the reception of his ward; her father having made it his request that she might, for a time at least, reside in the same house with her guardian, receive the same visits, and cultivate the acquaintance of his companions and friends.

When the will of her father was made known to Miss Milner, she submitted, without the least reluctance, to all he had required. Her mind, at that time impressed with the most poignant sorrow for his loss, made no distinction between it and happiness that was to come: and the day was appointed, with her silent acquiescence, when she was to arrive in London, and there take up her abode, with all the retinue of a rich heiress.

Mrs. Horton was delighted with the addition this acquisition to her family was likely to make to her annual income, and style of living. The good-natured Miss Woodley was overjoyed at the expectation of her new guest, yet she herself could not tell why; but the reason was, that her kind heart wanted a more ample field for its benevolence; and now her thoughts were all pleasingly employed how she should render, not only the lady herself, but even all her attendants, happy in their new situation.

The reflections of Dorriforth were less agreeably engaged; cares, doubts, fears, possessed his mind, and so forcibly possessed it, that upon every occasion which offered, he would inquisitively endeavour to gain intelligence of his



ward's disposition before he saw her; for he was, as yet, a stranger not only to the real propensities of her mind, but even to her person: a constant round of visits having prevented his meeting her at her father's, the very few times he had been at his house, since her final return from school. The first person whose opinion he, with all proper reserve, asked concerning Miss Milner, was Lady Evans, the widow of a baronet, who frequently visited at Mrs. Horton's.

But that the reader may be interested in what Dorriforth says and does, it is necessary to give some description of his person and manners. His figure was tall and elegant, but his face, except a pair of dark bright eyes, a set of white teeth, and a graceful arrangement of his clerical curls of brown hair, had not one feature to excite admiration—yet such a gleam of sensibility was diffused over each, that many persons admired his visage as completely handsome, and all were more or less attracted by it. In a word, the charm that is here meant to be described is a *countenance*—on *his* you read the feelings of his heart—saw all its inmost workings—the quick pulses that beat with hope and fear, or the gentle ones that moved in a more equal course of patience and resignation. On his countenance his thoughts were pourtrayed; and as his mind was enriched with every virtue that could make it valuable, so was his face adorned with every expression of those virtues: and they not only gave a lustre to his aspect, but added an harmonious sound to all he uttered; it was persuasive, it was perfect eloquence; whilst in his looks you beheld his thoughts moving with his lips, and ever coinciding with what he said.

With one of those expressions of countenance which revealed anxiety of heart, and yet with that graceful restraint of all gesticulation for which he was remarkable, even in his



most anxious concerns, he addressed Lady Evans, who had called on Mrs. Horton to hear and to request the news of the day. "Your ladyship was at Bath last spring—you know the young lady to whom I have the honour of being appointed guardian. Pray——"

He was earnestly intent upon asking a question, but was prevented by the person interrogated.

"Dear Mr. Dorriforth, do not ask me anything about Miss Milner. When I saw her she was very young; though, indeed, that is but three months ago, and she can't be much older now."

"She is eighteen," answered Dorriforth, colouring with regret at the doubts which this lady had increased, but not inspired.

"And she is very beautiful, *that* I can assure you," said Lady Evans.

"Which I call no qualification," said Dorriforth, rising from his chair in evident uneasiness.

"But where there is nothing else, let me tell you, beauty is something."

"Much worse than nothing, in my opinion," returned Dorriforth.

"But now, Mr. Dorriforth, do not, from what I have said, frighten yourself and imagine your ward worse than she really is. All I know of her is merely that she is young, idle, indiscreet, and giddy, with half-a-dozen lovers in her suite; some coxcombs, others men of gallantry, some single, and others married."

Dorriforth started. "For the first time of my life," cried he, with a manly sorrow, "I wish I had never known her father."

"Nay," said Mrs. Horton, who expected everything to happen just as she wished (for neither an excellent education, the best company, nor long experience, had been able



to cultivate or brighten this good lady's understanding), "Nay," said she, "I am sure, Mr. Dorriforth, you will soon convert her from all her evil ways."

"Dear me," returned Lady Evans, "I am sure I never meant to hint at anything evil—and for what I have said, I will give you up my authors if you please; for they were not observations of my own. All I do is to mention them again."

The good-natured Miss Woodley, who sat working at the window, an humble but attentive listener to this discourse, ventured here to say exactly six words—"Then don't mention them any more."

"Let us change the subject," said Dorriforth.

"With all my heart," cried Lady Evans; "and I am sure it will be to the young lady's advantage."

"Is Miss Milner tall or short?" asked Mrs. Horton, still wishing for further information.

"Oh, tall enough in all conscience," returned she. "I tell you again that no fault can be found with her person."

"But if her mind is defective," exclaimed Dorriforth, with a sigh——

"That may be improved as well as the person," cried Miss Woodley.

"No, my dear," returned Lady Evans, "I never heard of a pad to make straight an ill-shapen disposition."

"Oh, yes," answered Miss Woodley, "good company, good books, experience, and the misfortunes of others, may have more power to form the mind to virtue than——"

Miss Woodley was not permitted to proceed; for Lady Evans, rising hastily from her seat, cried, "I must be gone—I have a hundred people waiting for me at home—besides, were I inclined to hear a sermon, I should desire Mr. Dorriforth to preach, and not you."

Just then Mrs. Hillgrave was announced. "And here is



Mrs. Hillgrave," continued she; "I believe, Mrs. Hillgrave, you know Miss Milner, don't you? The young lady who has lately lost her father."

Mrs. Hillgrave was the wife of a merchant who had met with severe losses. As soon as the name of Miss Milner was uttered, she lifted up her hands, and the tears started in her eyes.

"There!" cried Lady Evans. "I desire you will give your opinion of her; and I am sorry I cannot stay to hear it." Saying this, she courtesied and took her leave.

When Mrs. Hillgrave had been seated a few minutes, Mrs. Horton, who loved information equally with the most inquisitive of her sex, asked the new visitor if she might be permitted to know why, at the mention of Miss Milner, she had seemed so much affected.

This question exciting the fears of Dorriforth, he turned anxiously round, attentive to the reply.

"Miss Milner," answered she, "has been my benefactress, and the best I ever had." As she spoke, she took out her handkerchief and wiped away the tears that ran down her face.

"How so?" cried Dorriforth, eagerly, with his own eyes moistened with joy, nearly as much as hers were with gratitude.

"My husband, at the commencement of his distresses," replied Mrs. Hillgrave, "owed a sum of money to her father, and, from repeated provocations, Mr. Milner was determined to seize upon all our effects. His daughter, however, by her intercessions, procured us time in order to discharge the debt; and when she found *that* time was insufficient, and her father no longer to be dissuaded from his intention, she secretly sold some of her most valuable ornaments to satisfy his demand, and screen us from its consequences."



Dorrieforth, pleased at this recital, took Mrs. Hillgrave by the hand, and told her, "She should never want a friend."

"Is Miss Milner tall or short?" again asked Mrs. Horton, fearing, from the sudden pause which had ensued, lest the subject should be dropped.

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Hillgrave.

"Is she handsome, or ugly?"

"I really can't tell."

"It is very strange you should not take notice!"

"I did take notice, but I cannot depend upon my own judgment—to me she appeared beautiful as an angel; but perhaps I was deceived by the beauties of her disposition."



## CHAPTER III.

THIS gentlewoman's visit inspired Mr. Dorriforth with some confidence in the principles and character of his ward. The day arrived on which she was to leave her late father's seat, and fix her abode at Mrs. Horton's; and her guardian, accompanied by Miss Woodley, went in his carriage to meet her, and waited at an inn on the road for her reception.

After many a sigh paid to the memory of her father, Miss Milner, upon the 10th of November, arrived at the place, half-way on her journey to town, where Dorriforth and Miss Woodley were expecting her. Besides attendants, she had with her a gentleman and lady, distant relations of her mother's, who thought it but a proper testimony of their civility to attend her part of the way,—but who so much envied her guardian the trust Mr. Milner had reposed in him, that as soon as they had delivered her safe into his care, they returned.

When the carriage, which brought Miss Milner, stopped at the inn gate, and her name was announced to Dorriforth, he turned pale—something like a foreboding of disaster trembled at his heart, and consequently spread a gloom over all his face. Miss Woodley was even obliged to rouse him from the dejection into which he was cast, or he would have sunk beneath it; she was obliged also to be the first to welcome his lovely charge—lovely beyond description.

But the natural vivacity, the gaiety which report had



given to Miss Milner, were softened by her recent sorrow to a meek sadness—and that haughty display of charms, imputed to her manners, was changed to a pensive demeanour. The instant Dorriforth was introduced to her by Miss Woodley as her “guardian, and her deceased father’s most beloved friend,” she burst into tears, knelt down to him for a moment, and promised ever to obey him as her father. He had his handkerchief to his face at the time, or she would have beheld the agitation—the remotest sensations of his heart.

This affecting introduction being over, after some minutes passed in general conversation, the carriages were again ordered; and, bidding farewell to the relations who had accompanied her, Miss Milner, her guardian, and Miss Woodley departed for town; the two ladies in Miss Milner’s carriage, and Dorriforth in that in which he came.

Miss Woodley, as they rode along, made no attempts to ingratiate herself with Miss Milner; though, perhaps such an honour might constitute one of her first wishes—she behaved to her but as she constantly behaved to every other human creature—and that was sufficient to gain the esteem of a person possessed of an understanding equal to Miss Milner’s; she had penetration to discover Miss Woodley’s unaffected worth, and was soon induced to reward it with the warmest friendship.



## CHAPTER IV.

AFTER a night's rest in London,—less violently impressed with the loss of her father, reconciled, if not already attached to her new acquaintances, her thoughts pleasingly occupied with the reflection that she was in that gay metropolis, a wild and rapturous picture of which her active fancy had often formed,—Miss Milner waked from a peaceful and refreshing sleep, with much of that vivacity, and with all those airy charms, which, for a while, had yielded their transcendent power to the weaker influence of her filial sorrow.

Beautiful as she had appeared to Miss Woodley and to Dorriforth on the preceding day, when she joined them in the morning at breakfast, repossessed of her lively elegance and dignified simplicity, they gazed at her and at each other alternately, with astonishment ; and Mrs. Horton, as she sat at the head of her tea-table, felt herself but as a menial servant ; such command has beauty when united with sense and virtue. In Miss Milner it was so united. Yet let not our over-scrupulous readers be misled, and extend their idea of her virtue so as to magnify it beyond that which frail mortals commonly possess ; nor must they cavil if, on a nearer view, they find it less ; but let them consider, that if she had more faults than generally belong to others, she had likewise more temptations.

From her infancy she had been indulged, to the extreme of folly, in all her wishes, and she started habitually at the unpleasant voice of control. She was beautiful ; she had been



too frequently told the high value of that beauty, and thought every moment passed in wasteful idleness during which she was not gaining some new conquest. She had a quick sensibility, which too frequently discovered itself in the immediate resentment of injuries or neglect. She had, besides, acquired the dangerous character of a wit; but to which she had no real pretensions, although the most discerning critic, hearing her converse, might fall into this mistake. Her replies had all the effect of repartee, not because she possessed those qualities which can properly be called wit, but because what she said was delivered with an energy, an instantaneous and powerful conception of the sentiment, joined with a real or a well-counterfeited simplicity, a quick turn of the eye, and an arch smile. Her words were but the words of others, and, like those of others, put into common sentences; but the delivery made them pass for wit, as grace in an ill-proportioned figure will often make it pass for symmetry.

And now, leaving description, the reader must form a judgment of the ward of Dorriforth by her actions; by all the round of great or trivial circumstances that shall be related.

At breakfast, which had just begun at the commencement of this chapter, the conversation was lively on the part of Miss Milner, wise on the part of Dorriforth, good on the part of Miss Woodley, and an endeavour at all three of those qualities on the part of Mrs. Horton. The discourse at length drew from Mr. Dorriforth this observation:—

“You have a greater resemblance to your father, Miss Milner, than I imagined you had from report: I did not expect to find you so like him.”

“Nor did I, Mr. Dorriforth, expect to find you anything like what you are!”



"No ! pray what did you expect to find me ?"

"I expected to find you an elderly man, and a plain man."

This was spoken in an artless manner, but in a tone which obviously declared she thought her guardian both young and handsome. He replied, but not without some little embarrassment—"A plain man you shall find me in all my actions."

"Then your actions are to contradict your appearance."

For in what she said, Miss Milner had the quality peculiar to wits, of hazarding the thought that first occurs, which thought is generally truth. On this, he paid her a compliment in return :—

"You, Miss Milner, I should suppose, must be a very bad judge of what is plain, and what is not."

"How so ?"

"Because I am sure you will readily own you do not think yourself handsome ; and allowing that, you instantly want judgment."

"And I would rather want judgment than beauty," she replied ; "and so I give up the one for the other."

With a serious face, as if proposing a very serious question, Dorriforth continued—"And you really believe you are not handsome ?"

"I should, if I consulted my own opinion, believe that I was not ; but in some respects I am like Roman Catholics ; I don't believe upon my own understanding, but from what other people tell me."

"And let this convince you," replied Dorriforth, "that what we teach is truth ; for you find you would be deceived, did you not trust to persons who know better than yourself. But, my dear Miss Milner, we will talk upon some other topic, and never resume this again. We differ in opinion, I dare say, on one subject only ; and this difference, I hope,



will never extend itself to any other. Therefore, let not religion be named between us; for as I have resolved never to persecute you, in pity be grateful, and do not persecute me."

Miss Milner looked surprised that anything so lightly said should be so seriously received. The kind Miss Woodley ejaculated a short prayer to herself, that Heaven would forgive her young friend the involuntary sin of religious ignorance; while Mrs. Horton, unperceived, as she imagined, made the sign of the cross upon her forehead, as a guard against the infectious taint of heretical opinions. This pious ceremony Miss Milner by chance observed, and now shewed such an evident propensity to burst into a fit of laughter, that the good lady of the house could no longer contain her resentment, but exclaimed, "God forgive you," with a severity so different from the sentiment which the words conveyed, that the object of her anger was, on this, obliged freely to indulge that impulse which she had in vain been struggling to suppress; and no longer suffering under the agony of restraint, she gave way to her humour, and laughed with a liberty so uncontrolled, that it soon left her in the room with none but the tender-hearted Miss Woodley a witness of her folly.

"My dear Miss Woodley," then cried Miss Milner, after recovering herself, "I am afraid you will not forgive me."

"No, indeed I will not," returned Miss Woodley.

But how unimportant, how weak, how ineffectual are *words* in conversation; looks and manner alone express; for Miss Woodley, with her charitable face and mild accents, saying she would not forgive implied only forgiveness; while Mrs. Horton, with her enraged voice and aspect, begging Heaven to pardon the offender, plainly said, she thought her unworthy of all pardon.



## CHAPTER V.

SIX weeks have now elapsed since Miss Milner has been in London, partaking with delight of all its pleasures; while Dorriforth has been sighing with apprehension, attending to all her words and ways with precaution, and praying with zealous fervour for her safety. Her own and her guardian's acquaintance, and, added to them, the new friends (to use the unmeaning language of the world) whom she was continually finding, crowded so perpetually to the house, that seldom had Dorriforth even a moment left him from her visits or visitors, to warn her of her danger; yet when a moment offered he caught it eagerly—pressed the necessity of “time not always passed in society; of reflection, of reading, of thoughts for a future state, and of virtues acquired to make old age supportable.” That forcible power of genuine feeling, which directs the tongue to eloquence, had its effect while she listened to him, and she sometimes put on the looks and gesture of assent; sometimes even spoke the language of conviction; but this the first call of dissipation would change to ill-timed raillery, or peevish remonstrance at being limited in delights which her birth and fortune entitled her to enjoy.

Among the many visitors who attended at her levees, and followed her wherever she went, there was one who seemed, even when absent from her, to share her thoughts. This was Lord Frederick Lawnley, the younger son of a duke, and the avowed favourite of all the most discerning women of taste.



He was not more than twenty-three; animated, elegant, extremely handsome, and possessed of every accomplishment that could captivate a heart less susceptible of love than Miss Milner's was supposed to be. With these allurements, no wonder if she took pleasure in his company; no wonder if she took pride in having it known that he was among the number of her devoted admirers. Dorriforth beheld this growing intimacy with alternate pain and pleasure: he wished to see Miss Milner married, to see his charge in the protection of another, rather than of himself; yet under the care of a young nobleman, immersed in all the vices of the town, without one moral excellence, but such as might eventually result from passing influences—under such care he trembled for her happiness; yet trembled more lest her heart should be purloined without even the authority of matrimonial views.

With sentiments like these, Dorriforth could never disguise his uneasiness at the sight of Lord Frederick; nor could the latter want penetration to discern the suspicion of the guardian; and, consequently, each was embarrassed in the presence of the other. Miss Milner observed—but observed with indifference—the sensations of both: there was but one passion which then held a place in her bosom, and that was vanity; vanity defined into all the species of pride, vainglory, self-approbation; an inordinate desire of admiration, and an immoderate enjoyment of the art of pleasing, for her own individual happiness, and not for the happiness of others. Still had she a heart inclined to, and oftentimes affected by, tendencies less unworthy; but those approaches to what was estimable were in their first impulse too frequently met and intercepted by some darling folly.

Miss Woodley (who could easily discover a virtue, although of the most diminutive kind, and scarcely through



the magnifying-glass of calumny could ever perceive a fault) was Miss Milner's inseparable companion at home, and her zealous advocate with Dorriforth, whenever, during her absence, she became the subject of discourse. He listened with hope to the praises of her friend, but saw with despair how little they were merited. Sometimes he struggled to subdue his anger, but oftener strove to suppress tears of pity for his ward's hapless state.

By this time all her acquaintance had given Lord Frederick to her as a lover; the servants whispered it, and some of the public prints had even fixed the day of marriage: but as no explanation had taken place on his part, Dorriforth's uneasiness was increased; and he seriously told Miss Milner he thought it would be indispensably prudent in her to entreat Lord Frederick to discontinue his visits. She smiled with ridicule at the caution; but finding it repeated, and in a manner that indicated authority, she promised not only to make, but to enforce the request. The next time he came she did so; assuring him it was by her guardian's desire, "who, from motives of delicacy, had permitted her to solicit as a favour what he could himself make as a demand." Lord Frederick reddened with anger: he loved Miss Milner; but he doubted whether, from the frequent proofs he had experienced of his own inconstancy, he should continue to love; and this interference of her guardian threatened an explanation or a dismissal before he became thoroughly acquainted with his own heart. Alarmed, confounded, and provoked, he replied—

"By heaven, I believe Mr. Dorriforth loves you himself; and it is jealousy alone that makes him treat me in this manner."

"For shame, my Lord," cried Miss Woodley, who was present, and who trembled with horror at the sacrilegious supposition.



"Nay, shame to him, if he is not in love," answered his Lordship; "for who but a savage could behold beauty like hers without owning its power?"

"Habit," replied Miss Milner, "is everything. Mr. Dorriforth sees and converses with beauty; but, from habit, he does not fall in love; and you, my Lord, from habit, often do."

"Then you believe that love is not in my disposition?"

"No more of it, my Lord, than habit could very soon extinguish."

"But I would not have it extinguished. I would rather it should mount to a flame; for I think it a crime to be insensible of the divine blessings love can bestow."

"Then you indulge the passion to avoid a sin? This very motive deters Mr. Dorriforth from that indulgence."

"It ought to deter him, for the sake of his oaths; but monastic vows, like those of marriage, were made to be broken; and surely when your guardian casts his eyes on you, his wishes——"

"Are never less pure," she replied eagerly, "than those which dwell in the bosom of my *celestial* guardian."

At that instant Dorriforth entered the room. The colour had mounted into Miss Milner's face, from the warmth with which she had delivered her opinion; and his accidental entrance at the very moment this praise had been conferred upon him in his absence heightened the blush to a deep glow on every feature: confusion and earnestness caused even her lips to tremble and her whole frame to shake.

"What is the matter?" cried Dorriforth, looking with concern on her discomposure.

"A compliment paid by herself to you, Sir," replied Lord Frederick, "has affected your ward in the manner you have seen."

"As if she blushed at the untruth," said Dorriforth.



"Nay, that is unkind," cried Miss Woodley; "for if you had been here——"

"I would not have said what I did," replied Miss Milner, "but had left him to vindicate himself."

"Is it possible that I can want any vindication? Who would think it worth their while to slander so unimportant a person as I am?"

"The man who has the charge of Miss Milner," replied Lord Frederick, "derives a consequence from her."

"No ill consequence, I hope, my Lord!" said Dorriforth, with a firmness in his voice and with an eye so fixed that his antagonist hesitated for a moment in want of a reply; and Miss Milner softly whispering to him, as her guardian turned his head, to avoid an argument, he bowed acquiescence. Then, as if in compliment to her, he changed the subject; and, with an air of ridicule, cried—

"I wish, Mr. Dorriforth, you would give me absolution of all my sins, for I confess they are many and manifold."

"Hold, my Lord," exclaimed Dorriforth, "do not confess before the ladies, lest, in order to excite their compassion, you should be tempted to accuse yourself of sins you have never yet committed."

At this Miss Milner laughed, seemingly so well pleased, that Lord Frederick, with a sarcastic sneer, repeated,—

—— "From Abelard it came,  
And Eloisa still must love the name."

Whether from an inattention to the quotation, or from a consciousness it was wholly inapplicable, Dorriforth heard it without one emotion of shame or of anger—while Miss Milner seemed shocked at the implication; her pleasantry was immediately suppressed, and she threw open the sash and held her head out of the window, to conceal the embarrassment these lines had occasioned.



The Earl of Elmwood was at that juncture announced—a Catholic nobleman, just come of age, and on the eve of marriage. His visit was to his cousin, Mr. Dorriforth; but as all ceremonious visits were alike received by Dorriforth, Miss Milner, and Mrs. Horton's family, in one common apartment, Lord Elmwood was ushered into this, and of course directed the conversation to a different topic.



## CHAPTER VI.

WITH an anxious desire that the affection, or acquaintance between Lord Frederick and Miss Milner might be finally dissolved, her guardian received, with infinite satisfaction, overtures of marriage from Sir Edward Ashton. Sir Edward was not young or handsome, old or ugly, but immensely rich, and possessed of qualities that made him worthy of the happiness to which he aspired. He was the man whom Dorriforth would have chosen before any other for the husband of his ward; and his wishes made him sometimes hope, against his cooler judgment, that Sir Edward would not be rejected. He was resolved, at all events, to try the force of his own power in the strongest recommendation of him.

Notwithstanding that dissimilarity of opinion which, in almost every instance, subsisted between Miss Milner and her guardian, there was in general the most punctilious observance of good manners from each towards the other—on the part of Dorriforth more especially; for his politeness would sometimes appear even like the result of a system which he had marked out for himself, as the only means to keep his ward restrained within the same limitations. Whenever he addressed her there was an unusual reserve upon his countenance, and more than usual gentleness in the tone of his voice: this appeared the effect of sentiments which her birth and situation inspired, joined to a studied mode of respect, best calculated to enforce the same from her. The wished-for consequence was produced; for though there was



an instinctive rectitude in the understanding of Miss Milner that would have taught her, without other instruction, what manners to observe towards her deputed father, yet, from some volatile thought, or some quick sense of feeling, which she had not been accustomed to correct, she was perpetually on the verge of treating him with levity; but he would on the instant recall her recollection by a reserve too awful, and a gentleness too sacred for her to violate. The distinction which both required was thus, by his skilful management alone, preserved.

One morning he took an opportunity, before her and Miss Woodley, to introduce and press the subject of Sir Edward Ashton's hopes. He first spoke warmly in his praise; then plainly said that he believed she possessed the power of making so deserving a man happy to the summit of his wishes. A laugh of ridicule was the only answer; but a sudden frown from Dorriforth having silenced her mirth, he resumed his usual politeness, and said—

“I wish you would shew a better taste than thus pointedly to disapprove of Sir Edward.”

“How, Mr. Dorriforth, can you expect me to give proofs of a good taste, when Sir Edward, whom you consider with such high esteem, has given so bad an example of his in approving me?”

Dorriforth wished not to flatter her by a compliment she seemed to have sought for, and for a moment hesitated what answer to make.

“Reply, Sir, to that question,” she said.

“Why, then, Madam,” returned he, “it is my opinion that, supposing what your humility has advanced be just, yet Sir Edward will not suffer by the suggestion; for in cases where the heart is so immediately concerned, as I believe Sir Edward's to be, taste, or rather reason, has little power to act.”



"You are in the right, Mr. Dorriforth: this is a proper justification of Sir Edward,—and when I fall in love, I beg that you will make the same excuse for me."

"Then," said he, earnestly, "before your heart is in that state which I have described, exert your reason."

"I shall," answered she, "and assuredly not consent to marry a man whom I could never love."

"Unless your heart be already disposed of, Miss Milner, what can make you speak with such a degree of certainty?"

He thought on Lord Frederick when he uttered this, and he rivetted his eyes upon her as if to penetrate her most secret inclinations, and yet trembling for what he might find there. She blushed, and her looks would have confirmed her guilty, if the unembarrassed and free tone of her voice, more than her words, had not preserved her from that sentence.

"No," she replied, "my heart is not stolen away; and yet I can venture to declare that Sir Edward will never possess it."

"I am sorry, for both your sakes, that these are your sentiments," he replied. "But as your heart is still your own," (and he seemed rejoiced to find it was) "permit me to warn you how you part with a thing so precious;—the dangers, the sorrows you hazard in bestowing it, are greater than you may possibly be aware of. The heart once gone, our thoughts, our actions, are no more our own than that is." He seemed *forcing* himself to utter all this, and yet he broke off as if he could have said much more, if the extreme delicacy of the subject had not restricted him.

When he left the room, and she heard the door close after him, she said, with an inquisitive thoughtfulness, "What can make good people so skilled in all the weaknesses of the bad? Mr. Dorriforth, with all those prudent admo-



nitions, appears rather like a man who has passed his life in the gay world, experienced all its dangerous allurements, all its repentant sorrows, than like one who has lived his whole time secluded in a monastic college, or in his own study. Then he speaks with such exquisite sensibility on the subject of love, that he commends the very thing which he attempts to depreciate. I do not think my Lord Frederick would make the passion appear in more pleasing colours by painting its delights, than Mr. Dorriforth could in describing its sorrows ; and if he talks to me frequently in this manner, I shall certainly take pity on Lord Frederick, for the sake of his adversary's eloquence."

Miss Woodley, who heard the conclusion of this speech with the tenderest concern, cried, "Alas ! you then think seriously of Lord Frederick !"

"Suppose I do, wherefore that *alas !* Miss Woodley?"

"Because I fear you will never be happy with him."

"That is plainly saying, he will not be happy with me."

"I do not know—I cannot speak of marriage from experience," answered Miss Woodley ; "but I think I can guess what it is."

"Nor can I speak of love from experience," replied Miss Milner ; "but I think I can guess what it is."

"But do not fall in love, my dear," cried Miss Woodley, with her accustomed simplicity of heart, as if she had been asking a favour that depended upon the will of the person intreated : "pray do not fall in love without the approbation of your guardian."

Her young friend smiled at the inefficacious prayer ; but promised to do all she could to oblige her.



## CHAPTER VII.

SIR EDWARD, not wholly discouraged by the denial, with which Dorriforth had, with delicacy, acquainted him, still hoped for a kind reception; and he was so often at the house of Mrs. Horton, that Lord Frederick's jealousy was excited, and the tortures he suffered in consequence convinced him, beyond a doubt, of the sincerity of his affection. Every time he beheld the object of his passion, for he still continued his visits, though not so frequently as heretofore, he pleaded his cause with such ardour, that Miss Woodley, who was sometimes present, and ever compassionate, could not resist wishing him success. He now unequivocally offered marriage, and intreated that he might lay his proposals before Mr. Dorriforth, but this was positively forbidden.

Her reluctance he imputed, however, more to the known partiality of her guardian to the addresses of Sir Edward, than to any motive which depended upon herself; and to Mr. Dorriforth he conceived a greater dislike than ever; believing that through his interposition, in spite of his ward's attachment, he might yet be deprived of her. But Miss Milner declared both to him and to her friend, that love had, at present, gained no influence over her mind. Yet did the watchful Miss Woodley oftentimes hear a sigh escape from her, unknown to herself, till she was reminded of it; and then a crimson blush would instantly overspread her face. This seeming struggle with her passion, endeared her more than ever to Miss Woodley; and she



would even risk the displeasure of Dorriforth by her compliance with every new pursuit that might amuse those leisure hours, which her friend, she now perceived, passed in heaviness of heart.

Balls, plays, incessant company, at length roused her guardian from that mildness with which he had been accustomed to treat her. Night after night his sleep had been disturbed by fears for her when abroad ; morning after morning it had been broken by the clamour of her return. He therefore gravely said to her one forenoon as he met her accidentally upon the staircase—

“I hope, Miss Milner, you pass this evening at home.”

Unprepared for the sudden question, she blushed and replied “Yes ;” though she knew she was engaged to a brilliant assembly, for which her milliner had been consulted a whole week.

She, however, flattered herself that what she had said might be excused as a mistake, a lapse of memory, or some other trifling fault, when he should know the truth. The truth was earlier divulged than she expected, for just as dinner was removed, her footman delivered a message to her from her milliner concerning a new dress for the evening—the *present evening* particularly marked. Her guardian looked astonished.

“I thought, Miss Milner, you gave me your word that you would pass this evening at home !”

“I mistook—for I had before given my word that I should pass it abroad.”

“Indeed !” cried he.

“Yes, indeed ; and I believe it is right that I should keep my first promise, is it not ?”

“The promise you gave me, then, you do not think of any consequence ?”



"Yes, certainly, if you do."

"I do."

"And mean, perhaps, to make it of more consequence than it deserves, by being offended."

"Whether that be so or not, you shall find I *am* offended." And he looked so.

She caught his piercing eyes—hers were immediately cast down; and she trembled—either with shame or with resentment.

Mrs. Horton rose from her chair, moved the decanters and fruit round the table, stirred the fire, and came back to her chair again, before another word was uttered. Nor had this good woman's officious labours taken the least from the awkwardness of the silence, which, as soon as the bustle she had contrived was over, returned in its full force.

At last Miss Milner, rising with alacrity, was preparing to go out of the room, when Dorriforth raised his voice, and, in a tone of authority, said—

"Miss Milner, you shall not leave the house this evening."

"Sir!" she exclaimed, with a kind of doubt of what she had heard—a surprise, which had fixed her hand on the door she had half opened, but which now she shewed herself irresolute whether to open wide in defiance, or to shut submissively. Before she could resolve, he rose from his chair, and said, with a force and warmth she had never heard him use before—

"I command you to stay at home this evening." And he walked immediately out of the apartment by another door.

Her hand fell involuntarily—she appeared motionless—till Mrs. Horton "beseeching her not to be uneasy at the treatment she had received," made her tears flow as if her heart was breaking.



Miss Woodley would have said something to comfort her, but she had caught the infection, and could not utter a word. It was not from any real cause of grief that Miss Woodley wept; but there was a magnetic quality in tears, which always attracted hers.

Mrs. Horton secretly enjoyed this scene, though the well-meaning of her heart, and the ease of her conscience, did not suffer her to think so. She, however, declared she had "long prognosticated it would come to this;" and she "only thanked heaven it was no worse."

"What can be worse, Madam?" cried Miss Milner; "Am not I disappointed of the ball?"

"You don't mean to go, then?" said Mrs. Horton. "I commend your prudence; and I dare say it is more than your guardian gives you credit for."

"Do you think I would go," answered Miss Milner, with an eagerness that for a time suppressed her tears, "in contradiction to his will?"

"It is not the first time, I believe, you have acted contrary to that, Miss Milner," replied Mrs. Horton; and affected a tenderness of voice, to soften the harshness of her words.

"If you think so, Madam, I see nothing that should prevent me now." And she went eagerly out of the room, as if she had resolved to disobey him. This alarmed poor Miss Woodley.

"My dear aunt," she cried to Mrs. Horton, "follow and prevail upon Miss Milner to give up her design; she means to be at the ball in opposition to her guardian's will."

"Then," said Mrs. Horton, "I'll not be instrumental in deterring her. If she does go it may be for the best; it may give Mr. Dorriforth a clearer knowledge what means are proper to convert her from evil."



“But, my dear Madam, she must be preserved from the evil of disobedience ; and, as you tempted, you will be the most likely to dissuade her. But if you will not, *I* must endeavour.”

Miss Woodley was leaving the room to perform this good work, when Mrs. Horton, in imitation of the example given her by Dorriforth, cried—

“Niece, I command you not to stir out of this room this evening.”

Miss Woodley obediently sat down ; and though her thoughts and heart were in the chamber of her friend, she never marked by one impertinent word, or by one line of her face, the restraint she suffered.

At the usual hour, Mr. Dorriforth and his ward were summoned to tea. He entered with a countenance which evinced the remains of anger ; his eye gave testimony of his absent thoughts ; and though he took up a pamphlet affecting to read, it was plain to discern that he scarcely knew he held it in his hand.

Mrs. Horton began to make tea with a mind as intent upon something else as Dorriforth's. She longed for the event of this misunderstanding ; and though she wished no ill to Miss Milner, yet with an inclination bent upon seeing something new, without the fatigue of going out of her own house, she was not over scrupulous what that novelty might be. But for fear she should have the imprudence to speak a word upon the subject which employed her thoughts, or even to look as if she thought of it at all, she pinched her lips close together, and cast her eyes on vacancy, lest their significant regards might expose her to detection. And for fear that any noise should intercept even the sound of what might happen, she walked across the room more softly than usual, and more softly touched every thing she was obliged to lay her hand on.



Miss Woodley thought it her duty to be mute; and now the jingle of a tea-spoon was like a deep-toned bell, all was so quiet.

Mrs. Horton, too, in the self-approving reflection that *she* was not in a quarrel or altercation of any kind, felt herself at this moment remarkably peaceful and charitable. Miss Woodley did not recollect *herself* so, but was so in reality. In her, peace and charity were instinctive virtues—accident could not increase them.

The tea had scarcely been made, when a servant came with Miss Milner's compliments, and she "did not mean to have any tea." The pamphlet shook in Dorriforth's hand while this message was delivered—he believed her to be dressing for her evening's entertainment; and now studied in what manner he should prevent or resent her disobedience to his commands. He coughed,—drank his tea—endeavoured to talk, but found it difficult—sometimes he read—and in this manner near two hours were passed away, when Miss Milner came into the room—not dressed for a ball, but as she had risen from dinner. Dorriforth read on, and seemed afraid of looking up, lest he should see what he could not have pardoned. She drew a chair and sat at the table by the side of her delighted friend.

After a few minutes' pause, and some little embarrassment on the part of Mrs. Horton, at the disappointment she had to encounter from this unexpected dutiful conduct, she asked Miss Milner, "If she would now have any tea?" She replied, "No, I thank you, Ma'am," in a voice so languid, compared with her usual one, that Dorriforth lifted up his eyes from the book; and seeing her in the same dress that she had worn all the day, turned them hastily away from her again; not with a look of triumph, but of confusion.



Whatever he might have suffered if he had seen Miss Milner decorated, and prepared to bid defiance to his commands; yet even upon that trial he would not have endured half the painful sensations he now for a moment felt—he felt himself to blame.

He feared he had treated her with too much severity; he admired her condescension, accused himself for having exacted it; he longed to ask her pardon—he did not know how.

A cheerful reply from her, to a question of Miss Woodley's, embarrassed him still more; he wished that she had been sullen; he then would have had a temptation, or pretence, to have been sullen too.

With all these sentiments crowding fast upon his heart, he still read, or seemed to read, as if he took no notice of what was passing; till a servant came into the room and asked Miss Milner at what time she should want the carriage? to which she replied, "I don't go out to-night." Dorriforth then laid the book out of his hand, and by the time the servant had left the room, thus began:—

"Miss Milner, I give you, I fear, some unkind proofs of my regard. It is often the ungrateful task of a friend to be troublesome; sometimes unmannerly. Forgive the duties of my office, and believe that no one is half so much concerned if it robs you of any degree of happiness, as I myself am."

What he said, he looked with so much sincerity, that had she been burning with rage at his late behaviour, she must have forgiven him, for the regret which he so forcibly expressed. She was going to reply, but found she could not, without accompanying her words with tears; therefore, after the first attempt, she desisted.

On this he rose from his chair, and, going to her, said, "Once more shew your submission by obeying me a second



time to-day. Keep your appointment: and be assured that I shall issue my commands with more circumspection for the future, as I find how strictly they are complied with."

Miss Milner, the gay, the vain, the dissipated, the haughty Miss Milner, sunk underneath this kindness, and wept with a gentleness and patience, which did not give more surprise than it gave joy to Dorriforth. He was charmed to find her disposition so tractable; prophesied to himself the future success of his guardianship, and her eternal as well as temporal happiness from this specimen of compliance.



## CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH Dorriforth was the good man that he has been described, there were in his nature shades of evil. There was an obstinacy, which himself and his friends termed firmness of mind; but which, had not religion and some contrary virtues weighed heavily in the balance, would have frequently degenerated into implacable stubbornness.

The child of a sister once beloved, who married a young officer against her brother's consent, was at the age of three years left an orphan, destitute of all support but from his uncle's generosity: but though Dorriforth maintained, he would never see him. Miss Milner, whose heart was a receptacle for the unfortunate, no sooner was told the melancholy history of Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, the parents of the child, than she longed to behold the innocent inheritor of her guardian's resentment, and took Miss Woodley with her to see the boy. He was at a farm-house a few miles from town; and his extreme beauty and engaging manners wanted not the sorrows to which he had been born to give him farther recommendation to the kindness of her who had come to visit him. She looked at him with admiration and pity, and having endeared herself to him by the most affectionate words and caresses, on her bidding him farewell, he cried most piteously to go along with her. Unused at any time to resist temptations, whether to reprehensible or to laudable actions, she yielded to his



supplications; and having overcome a few scruples of Miss Woodley's, determined to take young Rushbrook to town, and present him to his uncle. This design was no sooner formed than executed. By making a present to the nurse, she readily gained her consent to part with him for a day or two; and the excess of joy denoted by the countenance of the child on being placed in the carriage, repaid her beforehand for every reproof she might receive from her guardian for the liberty she had taken.

"Besides," said she to Miss Woodley, who had still her fears, "do you not wish his uncle should have a warmer interest in his care than duty? It is duty alone which induces Mr. Dorriforth to provide for him; but it is proper that affection should have some share in his benevolence; and how, when he grows older, will he be so fit an object of the love which compassion excites as he is at present?"

Miss Woodley acquiesced. But before they arrived at their own door it came into Miss Milner's remembrance that there was a grave sternness in the manners of her guardian when provoked; the recollection of which made her a little apprehensive for what she had done; her friend, who knew him better than she did, was more so. They both became silent as they approached the street where they lived; for Miss Woodley, having once represented her fears, and having suppressed them in resignation to Miss Milner's better judgment, would not repeat them, and Miss Milner would not confess that they were now troubling her.

Just, however, as the coach stopped at their home, she had the forecast and the humility to say, "We will not tell Mr. Dorriforth the child is his nephew, unless he should appear fond and pleased with him, and then I think we may venture without any danger."

This was agreed; and when Dorriforth entered the room



just before dinner, poor Harry Rushbrook was introduced as the son of a lady who frequently visited there. The deception passed, his uncle shook hands with him, and at length, highly pleased with his engaging manner and applicable replies, took him on his knee, and caressed him with affection. Miss Milner could scarcely restrain the joy it gave her; but unluckily, Dorriforth said soon after to the child, "And now tell me your name."

"Harry Rushbrook," replied he, with force and clearness of voice.

Dorriforth was holding him fondly round the waist as the child stood with his feet upon his knees; and at this reply he did not *throw* him from him; but he removed his hands, which had supported him, so suddenly, that the child, to avoid falling on the floor, threw himself about his uncle's neck. Miss Milner and Miss Woodley turned aside to conceal their tears. "I had like to have been down," cried Harry, fearing no other danger. But his uncle took hold of each hand which had twined around him, and placed him immediately on the ground. The dinner being that instant served, he gave no greater marks of his resentment than calling for his hat, and walking instantly out of the house.

Miss Milner cried for anger; yet she did not shew less kindness to the object of this vexatious circumstance: she held him in her arms while she sat at table, and repeatedly said to him (though he had not the sense to thank her), "That she would always be his friend."

The first emotions of resentment against Dorriforth being passed, she returned with her little charge to the farm-house, before it was likely his uncle should come back; another instance of obedience, which Miss Woodley was impatient her guardian should know: she therefore inquired where he was gone, and sent him a note for the sole purpose of



acquainting him with it, offering at the same time an apology for what had happened. He returned in the evening seemingly reconciled ; nor was a word mentioned of the incident which had occurred in the former part of the day ; still in his countenance remained the evidence of a perfect recollection of it, without one trait of compassion for his helpless nephew.



## CHAPTER IX.

THERE are few things so mortifying to a proud spirit as to suffer by immediate comparison ; men can hardly bear it, but to women the punishment is intolerable ; and Miss Milner now laboured under this humiliation to a degree which gave her no small inquietude.

Miss Fenton, young, of exquisite beauty, elegant manners, gentle disposition, and discreet conduct, was introduced to Miss Milner's acquaintance by her guardian, and frequently, sometimes inadvertently, held up by him as a pattern for her to follow : for when he did not say this in direct terms, it was insinuated by the warmth of his panegyric on those virtues in which Miss Fenton excelled, and in which his ward was obviously deficient. Conscious of her own inferiority in these subjects of her guardian's praise, Miss Milner, instead of being inspired to emulation, was provoked to envy.

Not to admire Miss Fenton was impossible—to find one fault with her person or sentiments was equally impossible—and yet to love her was unlikely.

That serenity of mind which kept her features in a continual placid form, though enchanting at the first glance, upon a second or third fatigued the sight for want of variety ; and to have seen her distorted with rage, convulsed with mirth, or in deep dejection, had been to her advantage. But her superior soul appeared above those emotions, and there was more inducement to worship her as a saint than



to love her as a woman. Yet Dorriforth, whose heart was not formed (at least not educated) for love, regarding her in the light of friendship only, beheld her as the most perfect model for her sex. Lord Frederick on first seeing her was struck with her beauty, and Miss Milner apprehended she had introduced a rival; but he had not seen her three times, before he called her "The most insufferable of Heaven's creatures," and vowed there was more charming variety in the plain features of Miss Woodley.

Miss Milner had a heart affectionate to her own sex, even where she saw them in possession of superior charms; but whether from the spirit of contradiction, from feeling herself more than ordinarily offended by her guardian's praise of this lady, or that there was a reserve in Miss Fenton that did not accord with her own frank and ingenuous disposition, so as to engage her esteem, certain it is that she took infinite satisfaction in hearing her beauty and virtues depreciated or turned into ridicule, particularly if Mr. Dorriforth was present. This was painful to him on many accounts; perhaps an anxiety for his ward's conduct was not among the least; and, whenever the circumstance occurred, he could with difficulty restrain his anger. Miss Fenton was not only a person whose amiable qualities he admired, but she was soon to be allied to him by her marriage with his nearest relation, Lord Elmwood, a young nobleman whom he sincerely loved.

Lord Elmwood had discovered all that beauty in Miss Fenton which every common observer could not but see. The charms of her mind and of her fortune had been pointed out by his tutor; and the utility of the marriage, in perfect submission to his precepts, he never permitted himself to question.

This preceptor held with a magisterial power the government of his pupil's passions; nay, governed them so entirely



that no one could perceive (nor did the young lord himself know) that he had any.

This rigid monitor and friend was a Mr. Sandford, bred a Jesuit in the same college at which Dorriforth had since been educated, but previous to his education the order had been compelled to take another name. Sandford had been the tutor of Dorriforth as well as of his cousin, Lord Elmwood, and by this double tie he seemed now entailed upon the family. As a Jesuit, he was consequently a man of learning; possessed of steadiness to accomplish the end of any design once meditated, and of sagacity to direct the views of men more powerful, but less ingenious, than himself. The young earl, accustomed in his infancy to fear him as his master, in his youthful manhood received every new indulgence with gratitude, and at length loved him as a father: nor had Dorriforth as yet shaken off similar feelings.

Mr. Sandford perfectly knew how to influence the sentiments and feelings of all human kind, but yet he had the forbearance not to "draw all hearts towards him." There were some whose hatred he thought it not unworthy of his pious labours to excite; and in that pursuit he was more rapid in his success than even in procuring esteem. It was an enterprise in which he succeeded with Miss Milner even beyond his most sanguine wish.

She had been educated at an English boarding-school, and had no idea of the distinctions of superiority and subordination maintained in a foreign seminary; besides, as a woman, she was privileged to say anything she pleased; and as a beautiful woman, she had a right to expect that whatever she pleased to say should be admired.

Sandford knew the hearts of women, as well as those of men, though he had passed but little of his time in their society; he saw Miss Milner's heart at the first sight of her



person; and beholding in that small circumference a weight of folly that he wished to eradicate, he began to toil in the vineyard, eagerly courting her detestation of him, in the hope he could also make her abominate herself. In the mortifications of slight he was expert; and being a man of talents, whom all companies, especially those of her friends, respected, he did not begin by wasting that reverence he so highly valued upon ineffectual remonstrances, of which he could foresee the reception, but wakened her attention by his neglect of her. He spoke of her in her presence as of an indifferent person, sometimes forgetting even to name her when the subject required it; then would ask her pardon, and say that he "really did not recollect her," with such seeming sorrow for his fault, that she could not suppose the offence intended, and of course felt the affront more acutely.

While, with every other person, it was upon her that a whole party depended for conversation, cards, music, or dancing, with Mr. Sandford she found that she was of no importance. Sometimes she tried to consider this disregard of her as merely the effect of ill-breeding; but he was not an ill-bred man; he was a gentleman by birth, and one who had kept the best company—a man of sense and learning. "And such a man slights me without knowing it," she said—for she had not dived so deeply into the powers of simulation, as to suspect that such careless manners were the result of art.

This behaviour of Mr. Sandford had its desired effect—it humbled her in her own opinion more than a thousand sermons would have done, preached on the vanity of youth and beauty. She felt an inward shame at the insignificance of those qualities that she never knew before; and would have been cured of all her pride, had she not possessed a degree of spirit beyond the generality of her sex—such a degree as



even Mr. Sandford, with all his penetration, did not expect to find. She determined to resent his treatment; and, entering the lists as his declared enemy, give to the world a reason why he did not acknowledge her sovereignty, as well as the rest of her devoted subjects.

She now commenced hostilities against all his arguments, his learning, and his favourite axioms; and by a happy talent for ridicule, in want of other weapons for this warfare, she threw in the way of the holy father as great trials of his patience as any that his order could have substituted in penance. Many things he bore like a martyr—at others, his fortitude would forsake him, and he would call on her guardian, his former pupil, to interpose with his authority; she would then declare that she only had acted thus “to try the good man’s temper, and that if he had combated with his fretfulness a few moments longer, she would have acknowledged his claim to canonization; but that, having yielded to the sallies of his anger, he must now go through numerous other probations.”

If Miss Fenton was admired by Dorriforth, by Sandford she was adored—and, instead of placing her as an example to Miss Milner, he spoke of her as of one endowed beyond Miss Milner’s power of imitation. Often, with a shake of his head and a sigh, would he say—

“No; I am not so hard upon you as your guardian; I only desire you to love Miss Fenton; to resemble her, I believe, is above your ability.”

This was too much to bear composedly—and poor Miss Woodley, who was generally a witness of these controversies, felt a degree of sorrow at every sentence which, like the foregoing, chagrined and distressed her friend. Yet as she suffered, too, for Mr. Sandford, her joy at her friend’s reply was mostly abated by the uneasiness it gave to *him*.



But Mrs. Horton felt for none but the right reverend priest ; and often did she feel so violently interested in his cause, that she could not refrain giving an answer herself in his behalf—thus doing the duty of an adversary with all the zeal of an advocate.



## CHAPTER X.

MR. SANDFORD finding his friend Dorriforth frequently perplexed in the management of his ward, and he himself thinking her incorrigible, gave his counsel, that a suitable match should be immediately sought out for her, and the care of so dangerous a person given into other hands. Dorriforth acknowledged the propriety of this advice, but lamented the difficulty of pleasing his ward as to the quality of her lover; for she had refused, besides Sir Edward Ashton, many others of equal pretensions. "Depend upon it, then," cried Sandford, "that her affections are engaged; and it is proper that you should know to whom." Dorriforth thought he did know, and mentioned Lord Frederick; but said that he had no further authority for the supposition than what his observation had given him, for that every explanation both upon his and her side had been evaded. "Take her then," cried Sandford, "into the country, and if Lord Frederick should not follow, there is an end of your suspicions." "I shall not easily prevail upon Miss Milner to leave town," replied he, "while it is in the highest fashion." "You can but try," returned Sandford; "and if you should not succeed now, at least fix the time you mean to go during the autumn, and be firm to your determination." "But in the autumn," replied Dorriforth, "Lord Frederick will of course be in the country; and as his uncle's estate is near our residence, he will not then so evidently follow her, as he would if I could induce her to go immediately."



It was agreed that the attempt should be made. Instead of receiving this abrupt proposal with uneasiness, Miss Milner, to the surprise of all present, immediately consented; and gave her guardian an opportunity of saying several of the kindest and politest things upon her ready compliance.

“A token of approbation from you, Mr. Dorriforth,” returned she, “I always considered with high estimation—but your commendations are now become infinitely superior in value by their scarcity; for I do not believe that since Miss Fenton and Mr. Sandford came to town, I have received one testimony of your esteem.”

Had these words been uttered in pleasantry, they might have passed without observation; but at the conclusion of the period, resentment flew to Miss Milner’s face, and she darted a piercing look at Mr. Sandford, which more pointedly expressed that she was angry with him, than if she had spoken volumes in her usual strain of raillery. Dorriforth was confused—but the concern which she had so plainly evinced for his good opinion throughout all that she had been saying, silenced any rebuke he might else have given her, for this unwarrantable charge against his friend. Mrs. Horton was shocked at the irreverent manner in which Mr. Sandford was treated—and Miss Woodley turned to him with a benevolent smile upon her face, hoping to set him an example of the manner in which he should receive the reproach. Her good wishes did not succeed—yet he was perfectly unruffled, and replied with coolness—

“The air of the country has affected the lady already: but it is a comfortable thing,” continued he, “that in the variety of humours to which some women are exposed, they cannot be uniform even in deceit.”

“Deceit!” cried Miss Milner, “in what am I deceitful? Did I ever pretend that I had an esteem for you?”



"That would not have been deceit, Madam, but merely good manners."

"I never, Mr. Sandford, sacrificed truth to politeness."

"Except when the country has been proposed, and you thought it politeness to appear satisfied."

"And I *was* satisfied, till I recollected that you might probably be of the party. Then, every grove was changed into a wilderness, every rivulet into a stagnant pool, and every singing bird into a croaking raven."

"A very poetical description!" returned he, calmly. "But, Miss Milner, you need not have had any apprehensions of *my* company in the country; for I understand the seat to which your guardian means to go belongs to you; and you may depend upon it, Madam, that I will never enter a house in which you are the mistress."

"Nor any house, I am certain, Mr. Sandford, but in which you are yourself the master."

"What do you mean, Madam?" (and for the first time he elevated his voice) "Am I the master here?"

"Your servants," replied she, looking at the company, "will not tell you so; but I do."

"You condescend, Mr. Sandford," cried Mrs. Horton, "in talking so much to a young, heedless woman; but I know you do it for her good."

"Well, Miss Milner," cried Dorriforth (and the most cutting thing he could say), "since I find my proposal of the country has put you out of humour, I shall mention it no more."

With all that quantity of resentment, anger, or rage, which sometimes boiled in the veins of Miss Milner, she was yet never wanting in that respect towards her guardian, which withheld her from ever uttering one angry sentence, directed immediately to him; and a severe word of his, instead of exasperating, was sure to subdue her. This was



the case at present. His words wounded her to the heart ; but she had not the asperity to reply to them as she thought they merited, and she burst into tears. Dorri-forth, instead of being concerned, as he usually was at seeing her uneasy, appeared on the present occasion provoked. He thought that her weeping was a new reproach to his friend, Mr. Sandford, and that to suffer himself to be moved by it would be a tacit condemnation of his friend's conduct. She understood his thoughts, and, getting the better of her tears, apologized for her weakness, adding—

“She could never bear with indifference an unjust accusation.”

“To prove that mine was unjust, Madam,” replied Dorri-forth, “be prepared to quit London, without any marks of regret, within a few days.”

She bowed assent. The necessary preparations were agreed upon ; and while, with apparent satisfaction, she adjusted the plan of her journey (like those who behave well, not so much to please themselves as to vex their enemies), she secretly triumphed in the mortification she hoped that Mr. Sandford would receive from her obedient behaviour.

The news of this intended journey was, of course, soon made public. There is a secret charm in being pitied, when the misfortune is but ideal ; and Miss Milner found infinite gratification in being told, “That hers was a cruel case, and that it was unjust and barbarous to force so much beauty into concealment while London was filled with her admirers, who, like her, would languish in consequence of her solitude.” These things, and a thousand such, a thousand times repeated, she still listened to with pleasure ; yet preserved the constancy not to shrink from her resolution of submitting.

Those involuntary sighs, however, that Miss Woodley had



long ago observed, became still more frequent ; and a tear half starting in her eye was an additional subject of her friend's observation. Yet, though Miss Milner at those times was softened into melancholy, she by no means appeared unhappy. Her friend was acquainted with love only by name ; yet she was confirmed from these increased symptoms, in what she before only suspected, that *love* must be the foundation of her care. "Her senses have been captivated by the person and accomplishments of Lord Frederick," said Miss Woodley to herself, "but her understanding compels her to see his faults, and reproaches her passion. And, oh !" cried she, "could her guardian and Mr. Sandford but know of this conflict, how much would they have to admire ; how little to condemn !"

With such friendly thoughts, and with the purest intentions, Miss Woodley did not fail to give both gentlemen reason to believe that a contention of this nature was the actual state of Miss Milner's mind. Dorriforth was affected at the description, and Sandford urged more than ever the necessity of leaving town. In a few days they departed ; Mrs. Horton, Miss Woodley, Miss Milner, and Mr. Dorriforth, accompanied by Miss Fenton, whom Miss Milner, knowing it to be the wish of her guardian, invited, for three months before her marriage, to her country seat. Elmwood House, or rather Castle, the seat of Lord Elmwood, was only a few miles distant from this residence, and he was expected to pass a great part of the summer there, with his tutor, Mr. Sandford.

In the neighbourhood was also (as it has been already said) an estate belonging to an uncle of Lord Frederick's ; and most of the party suspected they should soon see him on a visit there. To that expectation they, in great measure, attributed Miss Milner's visible content.



## CHAPTER XI.

WITH this party Miss Milner arrived at her country-house, and for near six weeks, all around was the picture of tranquility. Her satisfaction was as evident as every other person's ; and all severe admonition being at this time unnecessary, either to exhort her to her duty, or to warn her against her folly, she was even in perfect good humour with Miss Fenton, and added friendship to hospitality.

Mr. Sandford, who came with Lord Elmwood to the neighbouring seat, about a week after the arrival of Miss Milner at hers, was so scrupulously exact in the observance of his word, "*Never to enter a house of Miss Milner's,*" that he would not even call upon his friend Dorriforth there. But in their walks, and at Lord Elmwood's, the two parties, residing at the two houses, would occasionally join, and of course Sandford and she at those times met ; yet so distant was the reserve on either side, that not a single word upon any occasion was ever exchanged between them.

Miss Milner did not like Mr. Sandford ; yet, as there was no cause of inveterate rancour—admiring him, too, as a man who meant well, and being herself besides of a most forgiving temper—she frequently felt concerned that he did not speak to her, although it had been to find fault as usual ; and one morning as they were all, after a long ramble, drawing towards her house, where Lord Elmwood was



invited to dine, she could not refrain from dropping a tear at seeing Sandford turn back and wish them a "Good day."

But though she had the generosity to forgive an affront, she had not the humility to make a concession; and she foresaw that nothing less than some very humble atonement on her part would prevail upon the haughty priest to be reconciled. Dorrieforth saw her concern upon this last trifling occasion with a secret pleasure, and an admiration that she had never before excited. She once insinuated to him to be a mediator between them; but before any accommodation could take place, the peace and composure of their abode were disturbed by the arrival of Sir Edward Ashton at Lord Elmwood's, where it appeared as if he had been invited in order to pursue his matrimonial plan.

At a dinner given by Lord Elmwood, Sir Edward was announced as an unexpected visitor. Miss Milner did not suppose him such, and she turned pale when his name was uttered. Dorrieforth fixed his eyes upon her with some tokens of compassion, while Sandford seemed to exult, and by his repeated "Welcomes" to the Baronet, gave proofs how much he was rejoiced to see him. All the declining enmity of Miss Milner was renewed at this behaviour, and suspecting Sandford as the instigator of the visit, she could not overcome her displeasure, but gave way to it in a manner which she thought the most mortifying. Sir Edward, in the course of conversation, inquired "What neighbours were in the country?" and she, with an appearance of high satisfaction, named Lord Frederick Lawnley as being hourly expected at his uncle's. The colour spread over Sir Edward's face. Dorrieforth was confounded, and Mr. Sandford looked enraged.

"Did Lord Frederick tell *you* he should be down?" Sandford asked of Dorrieforth.



To which he replied, "No."

"But I hope, Mr. Sandford, you will permit *me* to know?" said Miss Milner. For as she now meant to torment him by what she said, she no longer constrained herself to silence; and as he harboured the same kind intention towards her, he had no longer any objection to make a reply and therefore answered—

"No, Madam, if it depended upon my permission, you should *not* know."

"Not *anything*, Sir, I dare say; you would keep me in utter ignorance."

"I would."

"From a self-interested motive, Mr. Sandford—that I might have a greater respect for you."

Some of the company laughed—Mrs. Horton coughed—Miss Woodley blushed—Lord Elmwood sneered—Dorriforth frowned—and Miss Fenton looked just as she did before.

The conversation was changed as soon as possible, and early in the evening the party from Milner Lodge returned home.

Miss Milner had scarcely left her dressing-room, where she had been taking off some part of her dress, when Dorriforth's servant came to acquaint her that his master was alone in his study, and begged to speak with her. She felt herself tremble: she immediately experienced a consciousness that she had not acted properly at Lord Elmwood's; for she felt a presentiment that her guardian was going to upbraid her, and her heart whispered that he had never yet reproached her without a cause.

Miss Woodley just then entered her apartment, and she found herself so much a coward as to propose that she should go with her, and aid her with a word or two occasionally in her excuse.



"What! you, my dear," returned Miss Woodley, "who not three hours ago had the courage to vindicate your own cause before a whole company, of whom many were your adversaries; do *you* want an advocate before your guardian alone, who has ever treated you with tenderness?"

"It is that very tenderness which frightens me; which intimidates, and strikes me dumb. Is it possible I can return impertinence for the language and manners which Mr. Dorriforth uses? And as I am debarred from that resource, what can I do but stand before him like a guilty creature, acknowledging my faults?"

She again entreated her friend to go with her; but on a positive refusal, from the impropriety of such an intrusion, she was obliged at length to go by herself.

How much does the difference of exterior circumstances influence not only the manners, but even the persons of some people! Miss Milner, in Lord Elmwood's drawing-room, surrounded by listeners, by admirers (for even her enemies could not look at her without admiration) animated with approbation and applause, and Miss Milner, with no giddy observer to give her actions a false *éclat*, destitute of all but her own understanding (which secretly condemns her), upon the point of receiving censure from her guardian and friend, are two different beings. Though still beautiful beyond description, she does not look even in person the same. In the last-mentioned situation, she was shorter in stature than in the former. She was paler—she was thinner—and a very different contour presided over her whole air, and all her features.

When she arrived at the door of the study she opened it with a trepidation she could hardly account for, and entered to Dorriforth the altered woman she has been represented.



His heart had taken the most decided part against her, and his face had assumed the most severe aspect of reproach; but her appearance gave an instantaneous change to his whole mind and countenance.

She halted, as if she feared to approach; he hesitated, as if he knew not how to speak. Instead of the anger with which he was prepared to begin, his voice involuntarily softened, and, without knowing what he said, he began,—

“My dear Miss Milner——”

She expected he was angry, and in her confusion his gentleness was lost upon her. She imagined that what he said might be censure, and she continued to tremble, though he repeatedly assured her that he meant only to advise, not to upbraid her.

“For as to all those little disputes between Mr. Sandford and you,” said he, “I should be partial if I blamed *you* more than *him*. Indeed, when you take the liberty to condemn him, his character makes the freedom appear in a more serious light than when he complains of you—and yet, if he provokes your retorts, he alone must answer for them; nor will I undertake to decide betwixt you. But I have a question to ask you, and to which I require a serious and unequivocal answer. Do you expect Lord Frederick in the country?”

Without hesitation she replied, “I do.”

“One more question I have to ask, Madam, and to which I expect a reply equally unreserved. Is Lord Frederick the man you approve for your husband?”

Upon this close interrogation she discovered an embarrassment beyond any she had ever yet betrayed, and faintly replied—

“No, he is not.”

“Your words tell me one thing,” answered Dorriforth, “but your looks declare another—which am I to believe?”



"Which you please," was her answer, while she discovered an insulted dignity that astonished without convincing him.

"But, then, why encourage him to follow you hither, Miss Milner?"

"Why commit a thousand follies," she replied, in tears, "every hour of my life?"

"You promote, then, the hopes of Lord Frederick without one serious intention of completing them? This is a conduct against which it is my duty to guard you, and you shall no longer deceive either him or yourself. The moment he arrives, it is my resolution that you refuse to see him, or consent to become his wife."

In answer to the alternative thus offered, she appeared averse to both propositions, and yet came to no explanation why; but left her guardian at the end of the conference as much at a loss to decide upon her true sentiments as he was before he had thus seriously requested he might be informed of them; but, having steadfastly taken the resolution which he had just communicated, he found that resolution a certain relief to his mind.



## CHAPTER XII.

SIR EDWARD ASHTON, though not invited by Miss Milner, yet frequently did himself the honour to visit her at her house ; sometimes he accompanied Lord Elmwood, at other times he came to see Dorriforth alone, who generally introduced him to the ladies. But Sir Edward was either so unwilling to give pain to the object of his love, or so intimidated by her frowns, that he seldom addressed her with a single word except the usual compliments at entering and retiring. This apprehension of offending, without one hope of pleasing, had the most awkward effect upon the manners of the worthy baronet ; and his endeavours to insinuate himself into the affections of the woman he loved merely by not giving her offence, either in speaking to her or looking at her, formed a character so whimsical, that it frequently forced a smile from Miss Milner, though his very name had often power to throw a gloom over her face. She looked upon him as the cause of her being hurried to the election of a lover before her own mind could well direct her where to fix. Besides, his pursuit was troublesome, while it was no triumph to her vanity, which, by the addresses of Lord Frederick, was in the highest manner gratified.

His Lordship now arrives in the country, and calls one morning at Miss Milner's. Her guardian sees his carriage coming up the avenue, and gives orders to the servants to say their lady is not at home, but that Mr. Dorriforth is. Lord Frederick leaves his compliments and goes away.

The ladies all observed his carriage and servants. Miss



Milner flew to her glass, adjusted her dress, and in her looks expressed every sign of palpitation; but in vain she keeps her eye fixed upon the door of the apartment—no Lord Frederick appears.

After some minutes of expectation, the door opens and her guardian comes in. She was disappointed. He perceived that she was, and he looked at her with a most serious face. She immediately called to mind the assurance he had given her, "That her acquaintance with Lord Frederick, in its then improper state, should not continue;" and between chagrin and confusion, she was at a loss how to behave.

Though the ladies were all present, Dorriforth said, without the smallest reserve, "Perhaps, Miss Milner, you may think I have taken an unwarrantable liberty in giving orders to your servants to deny you to Lord Frederick; but until his Lordship and I have had a private conference, or you condescend to declare your sentiments more fully in regard to his visits, I think it my duty to put an end to them."

"You will always perform your duty, Mr. Dorriforth, I have no doubt, whether I concur or not."

"Yet, believe me, Madam, I should perform it more cheerfully if I could hope that it was sanctioned by your inclinations."

"I am not mistress of my inclinations, Sir, or they should conform to yours."

"Place them under my direction, and I will answer for it they will."

A servant came in. "Lord Frederick is returned, Sir, and says he should be glad to see you."

"Shew him into the study," cried Dorriforth, hastily, and, rising from his chair, left the room.

"I hope they won't quarrel," said Mrs. Horton, meaning that she thought they would.



"I am sorry to see you so uneasy, Miss Milner," said Miss Fenton, with perfect unconcern.

As the badness of the weather had prevented their usual morning's exercise, the ladies were employed at their needles till the dinner-bell should call them away. "Do you think Lord Frederick is gone?" then whispered Miss Milner to Miss Woodley. "I think not," she replied. "Go, ask of the servants, dear creature;" and Miss Woodley went out of the room. She soon returned, and said, apart, "He is now getting into his chariot. I saw him pass in violent haste through the hall. He seemed to fly."

"Ladies, the dinner is waiting," cried Mrs. Horton, and they repaired to the dining-room, where Dorriforth soon after came, and engrossed their whole attention by his disturbed looks and unusual silence. Before dinner was over he was, however, more himself, but still he appeared thoughtful and dissatisfied. At the time of their evening walk he excused himself from accompanying them, and they saw him in a distant field with Mr. Sandford in earnest conversation; for Sandford and he stopped on one spot for a quarter of an hour, as if the interest of the subject had so engaged them, that they stood still without knowing it. Lord Elmwood, who had joined the ladies, walked home with them. Dorriforth entered soon after, in a much less gloomy humour than when he went out, and told his relation that he and the ladies would dine with him the next day if he was disengaged; and it was agreed they should.

Still Dorriforth was in some perturbation, but the immediate cause was concealed till the day following, when, about an hour before the company's departure from Elmwood Castle, Miss Milner and Miss Woodley were desired by a servant to walk into a separate apartment, in which they found Mr. Dorriforth, with Mr. Sandford, waiting for them. Her guardian made an apology to Miss Milner for the form,



the ceremony, of which he was going to make use ; but he trusted the extreme weight which oppressed his mind lest he should mistake the real sentiments of a person whose happiness depended upon his correct knowledge of them, would plead his excuse.

"I know, Miss Milner," continued he, "the world in general allows to unmarried women great latitude in disguising their minds with respect to the man they love. I, too, am willing to pardon any little dissimulation that is but consistent with a modesty that becomes every woman upon the subject of marriage. But here, to what point I may limit, or you may extend, this kind of venial deceit, may so widely differ, that it is not impossible for me to remain unacquainted with your sentiments, even after you have revealed them to me. Under this consideration I wish once more to hear your thoughts in regard to matrimony, and to hear them before one of your own sex, that I may form an opinion by her constructions."

To all this serious oration Miss Milner made no other reply than by turning to Mr. Sandford and asking if he was the person of her own sex to whose judgment her guardian was to submit his own.

"Madam," cried Sandford, angrily, "you are come hither upon serious business."

"Any business must be serious to me, Mr. Sandford, in which you are concerned ; and if you had called it *sorrowful*, the epithet would have suited as well."

"Miss Milner," said her guardian, "I did not bring you here to contend with Mr. Sandford."

"Then why, Sir, bring him hither ? for where he and I are there must be contention."

"I brought him hither, Madam, or, I should rather say, brought you to this house, merely that he might be present on this occasion, and with his discernment relieve me from



a suspicion that my own judgment is neither able to suppress nor to confirm."

"Are there any more witnesses you may wish to call in, Sir, to remove your doubts of my veracity? If there are, pray send for them before you begin your interrogations."

He shook his head. She continued—

"The whole world is welcome to hear what I say, and every different person is welcome to judge me differently."

"Dear Miss Milner!" cried Miss Woodley, with a tone of reproach for the vehemence with which she had spoken.

"Perhaps, Miss Milner," said Dorriforth, "you will not now reply to those questions I was going to put?"

"Did I ever refuse, Sir," returned she, with a self-approving air, "to comply with any request that you have seriously made? Have I ever refused obedience to your commands whenever you thought proper to lay them upon me? If not, you have no right to suppose that I shall do so now."

He was going to reply, when Mr. Sandford sullenly interrupted him, and, walking towards the door, cried, "When you come to the point for which you brought me here, send for me again."

"Stay now," said Dorriforth. "And Miss Milner," continued he, "I not only entreat, but conjure you to tell me—Have you given your word or your affections to Lord Frederick Lawnley?"

The colour spread over her face, and she replied—

"I thought confessions were always to be made in secret; however, as I am not a member of your church, I submit to the persecution of a heretic, and I answer—Lord Frederick has neither my word, nor any share in my affections."

Sandford, Dorriforth, and Miss Woodley looked at each other with a degree of surprise that for some time kept them



silent. At length Dorriforth said, "And it is your firm intention never to become his wife?"

To which she answered—"At present it is."

"At present! Do you suspect you shall change your mind?"

"Women sometimes do."

"But before that change can take place, your acquaintance will be at an end; for it is that which I shall next insist upon, and to which you can have no objection."

She replied, "I had rather it should continue."

"On what account?" cried Dorriforth.

"Because it entertains me."

"For shame, for shame!" returned he; "it endangers your character and your happiness. Yet again, do not suffer me to interfere, if the breaking with my Lord Frederick can militate against your felicity."

"By no means," she answered; "Lord Frederick makes part of my amusement, but can never constitute my felicity."

"Miss Woodley," said Dorriforth, "do you comprehend your friend in the same literal and unequivocal sense that I do?"

"Certainly I do, Sir."

"And pray, Miss Woodley," said he, "were those the sentiments which you have always entertained?"

Miss Woodley hesitated. He continued—"Or has this conversation altered them?"

She hesitated again, then answered—"This conversation has altered them."

"And yet you confide in it!" cried Sandford, looking at her with contempt.

"Certainly I do," replied Miss Woodley.

"Do not you, then, Mr. Sandford?" asked Dorriforth.

"I would advise you to act as if I did," replied Sandford.



"Then, Miss Milner," said Dorriforth, "you see Lord Frederick no more—and I hope I have your permission to apprise him of this arrangement."

"You have, Sir," she replied, with a completely unembarrassed countenance and voice.

Her friend looked at her as if to discover some lurking wish, adverse to all these protestations, but she could not discern one. Sandford, too, fixed his penetrating eyes upon her, as if he would look through her soul; but finding it perfectly composed, he cried out—

"Why, then, not write his dismissal herself, and save you, Mr. Dorriforth, the trouble of any further contest with him?"

"Indeed, Miss Milner," said Dorriforth, "that would oblige me; for it is with great reluctance that I meet him upon this subject; he was extremely impatient and importunate when he was last with me: he took advantage of my ecclesiastical situation to treat me with a levity and ill-breeding, that I could ill have suffered upon any other consideration than a compliance with my duty."

"Dictate what you please, Mr. Dorriforth, and I will write it," said she, with a warmth like the most unaffected inclination. "And while you, Sir," she continued, "are so indulgent as not to distress me with the importunities of any gentleman to whom I am averse, I think myself equally bound to rid you of the impertinence of every one to whom you may have objection."

"But," answered he, "rest assured I have no material objection to my Lord Frederick, except from that dilemma, in which your acquaintance with him has involved us all; and I should conceive the same against any other man, were the same circumstance to occur. As you have now, however, freely and politely consented to the manner in which it has been proposed that you shall break with him, I will not



trouble you a moment longer upon a subject on which I have so frequently explained my wishes, but conclude it by assuring you, that your ready acquiescence has given me the sincerest satisfaction."

"I hope, Mr. Sandford," said she, turning to him with a smile, "I have given *you* satisfaction likewise?"

Sandford could not say yes, and was ashamed to say no; he, therefore, made answer only by his looks, which were full of suspicion. She, notwithstanding, made him a very low courtesy. Her guardian then handed her out of the apartment into her coach, which was waiting to take her, Miss Woodley, and himself, home.



## CHAPTER XIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the seeming readiness with which Miss Milner had resigned all farther acquaintance with Lord Frederick, during the short ride home she appeared to have lost great part of her wonted spirits; she was thoughtful, and once sighed heavily. Dorriforth began to fear that she had not only made a sacrifice of her affections, but of her veracity; yet, why she had done so, he could not comprehend.

As the carriage moved slowly through a lane between Elmwood Castle and her own house, on casting her eyes out of the window, Miss Milner's countenance was brightened in an instant; and that instant Lord Frederick, on horseback, was at the coach door, and the coachman stopped.

"Oh, Miss Milner," cried he (with a voice and manner that could leave little doubt of the truth of what he said), "I am overjoyed at the happiness of seeing you, even though it is but an accidental meeting."

She was evidently glad to see *him*; but the earnestness with which he spoke, seemed to put her upon her guard not to express the like satisfaction, and she said, in a cool constrained manner, she was "glad to see his Lordship."

The reserve with which she spoke, gave Lord Frederick immediate suspicion who was in the coach with her, and turning his head quickly, he met the stern eye of Dorriforth; upon which, without the smallest salutation, he turned from



him again abruptly and rudely. Miss Milner was confused, and Miss Woodley in torture, at this palpable affront, to which Dorriforth alone appeared indifferent.

"Go on," said Miss Milner to the footman; "desire the coachman to drive on."

"No," cried Lord Frederick, "not till you have told me when I shall see you again."

"I will write you word, my Lord," replied she, something alarmed. "You shall have a letter immediately after I get home."

As if he guessed what its contents were to be, he cried out with warmth, "Take care, then, Madam, how you treat me in that letter—and you, Mr. Dorriforth," turning to him, "do you take care what it contains; for if it be dictated by you, to you I shall send the answer."

Dorriforth, without making any reply, or casting a look at him, put his head out of the window on the opposite side, and called, in a very angry tone, to the coachman, "How dare you not drive on, when your lady orders you?"

The sound of Dorriforth's voice in anger, was to the servants so unusual, that it acted like electricity upon the man, and he drove away at the instant with such rapidity that Lord Frederick was in a moment many yards behind. As soon, however, as he recovered from the surprise into which this sudden command had thrown him, he rode with speed after the carriage, and followed it, till it arrived at the door of Miss Milner's house; there, giving himself up to the rage of love, or to rage against Dorriforth for the contempt he had shewn to him, he leaped from his horse when Miss Milner stepped from her carriage, and seizing her hand, entreated her "Not to desert him, in compliance with the injunctions of monkish hypocrisy."

Dorriforth heard this, standing silently by, with a manly scorn upon his countenance.



Miss Milner struggled to loose her hand, saying, "Excuse me from replying to you now, my Lord."

In return, he lifted her hand eagerly to his lips, and began to devour it with kisses; when Dorriforth, with an instantaneous impulse, rushed forward, and struck him a violent blow in the face. Under the force of this assault, and the astonishment it excited, Lord Frederick staggered, and, letting fall the hand of Miss Milner, her guardian immediately laid hold of it, and led her into the house.

She was terrified beyond description; and with extreme difficulty Mr. Dorriforth conveyed her to her own chamber, without taking her in his arms. When, by the assistance of her maid, he had placed her upon a sofa—overwhelmed with shame and confusion for what he had done, he fell upon his knees before her, and "implored her forgiveness for the indelicacy he had been guilty of in her presence." And that he had alarmed her, and had forgotten the respect which he thought sacredly her due, seemed the only circumstance which then dwelt upon his thoughts.

She felt the indecorum of the posture he had condescended to take, and was shocked. To see her guardian at her feet struck her with a sense of impropriety as if she had seen a parent there. With agitation and emotion she conjured him to rise; and, with a thousand protestations, declared that she thought the rashness of the action was the highest proof of his regard for her.

Miss Woodley now entered. Her care being ever employed upon the unfortunate, Lord Frederick had just been the object of it. She had waited by his side, and, with every good purpose, had preached patience to him, while he was smarting under the pain, but more under the shame, of his chastisement. At first his fury threatened a retort upon the servants around him (and who refused his entrance into the house) for the punishment he had received. But, in the



certainty of an *amende honorable*, which must hereafter be made, he overcame the many temptations which the moment offered, and, remounting his horse, rode away from the scene of his disgrace.

No sooner had Miss Woodley entered the room, and Dorriforth had resigned to her the care of his ward, than he flew to the spot where he had left Lord Frederick, negligent of what might be the event if he still remained there. After inquiring, and being told that he was gone, Dorriforth retired to his own apartment with a bosom torn by more excruciating sensations than those which he had given to his adversary.

The reflection which struck him first with remorse as he shut the door of his chamber was, "I have departed from my character—from the sacred character, the dignity of my profession and sentiments—I have departed from myself. I am no longer the philosopher, but the ruffian. I have treated with an unpardonable insult a young nobleman whose only offence was love, and a fond desire to insinuate himself into the favour of his mistress. I must atone for this outrage in whatever manner he may choose; and the law of honour and of justice (though in this one instance contrary to the law of religion) enjoins that if he demands my life in satisfaction for his wounded feelings, it is his due. Alas! that I could but have laid it down this morning, unsullied with a cause for which it will make inadequate atonement!"

His next reproach was, "I have offended and filled with horror a beautiful young woman whom it was my duty to protect from those brutal manners to which I myself have exposed her."

Again, "I have drawn upon myself the just upbraidings of my faithful preceptor and friend; of the man in whose judgment it was my delight to be approved. Above all, I have drawn upon myself the stings of conscience."



“Where shall I pass this sleepless night?” cried he, walking repeatedly across his chamber. “Can I go to the ladies? I am unworthy of their society. Shall I go and repose my disturbed mind on Sandford? I am ashamed to tell him the cause of my uneasiness. Shall I go to Lord Frederick, and, humbling myself before him, beg his forgiveness? He would spurn me for a coward. No,” and he lifted up his eyes to heaven, “Thou all-great, all-wise, and omnipotent Being,—Thou whom I have most offended, it is to Thee alone that I have recourse in this hour of tribulation, and from Thee alone I solicit comfort. The confidence with which I now address myself to Thee, encouraged by that long intercourse which religion has effected, I here acknowledge to repay me amply in this one moment for the many years of my past life devoted with my best, though imperfect, efforts to Thy service.”



## CHAPTER XIV.

ALTHOUGH Miss Milner had not foreseen any fatal event resulting from the indignity offered to Lord Frederick, yet she passed a night very different from those to which she had been accustomed. No sooner was she falling into a sleep than a thousand vague but distressing ideas darted across her imagination. Her heart would sometimes whisper to her when she was half asleep, "Lord Frederick is banished from you for ever." She shakes off the uneasiness this consideration brings along with it: she then starts, and sees the blow still aimed at him by Dorriforth. No sooner has she driven away this painful image than she is again awakened by beholding her guardian at her feet suing for pardon. She sighs, she trembles, and is chilled with terror.

Relieved by tears, towards the morning she sinks into a slumber, but, waking, finds the same images crowding all together upon her mind. She is doubtful to which to give the preference. One, however, rushes the foremost and continues so. She knows not the fatal consequence of ruminating, nor why she dwells upon that more than upon all the rest; but it will give place to none.

She rises languid and disordered, and at breakfast adds fresh pain to Dorriforth by her altered appearance.

He had scarcely left the room when an officer waited upon him with a challenge from Lord Frederick. To the message delivered by this gentleman, he replied—

"Sir, as a clergyman, more especially one of the Church of



Rome, I know not whether I am not exempt from answering a demand of this kind; but, not having had forbearance to avoid an offence, I will not claim an exemption that would only indemnify me from making reparation."

"You will then, Sir, meet Lord Frederick at the appointed hour?" said the officer.

"I will, Sir; and my immediate care shall be to find a gentleman who will accompany me."

The officer withdrew; and when Dorriforth was again alone he was going once more to reflect, but he durst not. Since yesterday, reflection for the first time had become painful to him; and even as he rode the short way to Lord Elmwood's immediately after, he found his own thoughts were so insufferable that he was obliged to enter into conversation with his servant. Solitude, that formerly charmed him, would at those moments have been worse than death.

At Lord Elmwood's he met Sandford in the hall, and the sight of him was no longer welcome. He knew how different the principles which he had just adopted were to those of that reverend friend, and without Sandford's complaining, or even suspecting what had happened, his presence was a sufficient reproach. He passed him as hastily as he could, and, inquiring for Lord Elmwood, disclosed to him his errand. It was to ask him to be his second. The young earl started, and wished to consult his tutor, but that his kinsman strictly forbade; and having urged his reasons with arguments which at least the earl could not refute, he was at length prevailed upon to promise that he would accompany him to the field, which was at the distance of only a few miles, and the parties were to be there at seven on the same evening.

As soon as his business with Lord Elmwood was settled, Dorriforth returned home to make preparations for the event which might ensue from this meeting. He wrote letters to



several of his friends and one to his ward, in writing which he could with difficulty preserve the usual firmness of his mind.

Sandford, going into Lord Elmwood's library soon after his relation had left him, expressed his surprise at finding he was gone; upon which that nobleman, having answered a few questions and given a few significant hints that he was entrusted with a secret, frankly confessed what he had promised to conceal.

Sandford, as much as a holy man could be, was enraged at Dorriforth for the cause of the challenge, but was still more enraged at his wickedness in accepting it. He applauded his pupil's virtue in making the discovery, and congratulated himself that he should be the instrument of saving not only his friend's life, but of preventing the scandal of his being engaged in a duel.

In the ardour of his designs he went immediately to Miss Milner's—entered that house which he had so long refused to enter, and at a time when he was upon peculiarly bad terms with its owner.

He asked for Dorriforth, went hastily into his apartment, and poured upon him a torrent of rebukes. Dorriforth bore all he said with the patience of a devotee, but with the firmness of a man. He owned his fault; but no eloquence could make him recall the promise he had given to repair the injury. Unshaken by the arguments, persuasions, and menaces of Sandford, he gave an additional proof of that inflexibility for which he had been long distinguished; and after a dispute of two hours they parted, neither of them the better for what the other had advanced, but Dorriforth something the worse. His conscience gave testimony to Sandford's opinion "that he was bound by ties more sacred than worldly honour." But while he owned, he would not yield to the duty.

Sandford left him, determined, however, that Lord Elm-



wood should not be accessory to his guilt, and this he declared; upon which Dorriforth took the resolution of seeking another second.

In passing through the house on his return home Sandford met, by accident, Mrs. Horton, Miss Milner, and the other two ladies returning from a saunter in the garden. Surprised at the sight of Mr. Sandford in her house, Miss Milner would not express that surprise; but, going up to him with all the friendly benevolence which in general played about her heart, she took hold of one of his hands and pressed it with a kindness which told him more forcibly that he was welcome, than if she had made the most elaborate speech to convince him of it. He, however, seemed little touched with her behaviour; and, as an excuse for breaking his word, cried—

“I beg your pardon, Madam; but I was brought hither in my anxiety to prevent murder.”

“Murder!” exclaimed all the ladies.

“Yes,” answered he, addressing himself to Miss Fenton, “your betrothed husband is a party concerned; he is going to be second to Mr. Dorriforth, who means this very evening to be killed by my Lord Frederick, or to kill him, in addition to the blow that he gave him last night.”

Mrs. Horton exclaimed, “If Mr. Dorriforth dies, he dies a martyr.”

Miss Woodley cried with fervour, “Heaven forbid!”

Miss Fenton cried, “Dear me!”

While Miss Milner, without uttering one word, sunk speechless on the floor.

They lifted her up, and brought her to the door which entered into the garden. She soon recovered; for the tumult of her mind would not suffer her to remain inactive, and she was roused, in spite of her weakness, to endeavour to ward off the impending disaster. In vain, however, she



attempted to walk to her guardian's apartment; she sunk as before, and was taken to a settee, while Miss Woodley was dispatched to bring him to her.

Informed of the cause of her indisposition, he followed Miss Woodley with a tender anxiety for her health, and with grief and confusion that he had so carelessly endangered it. On his entering the room, Sandford beheld the inquietude of his mind, and cried, "Here is your *guardian*," with a cruel emphasis on the word.

He was too much engaged by the sufferings of his ward to reply to Sandford. He placed himself on the settee by her, and with the utmost tenderness, reverence, and pity, entreated her not to be concerned at an accident in which he, and he alone, had been to blame; but which, he had no doubt, would be accommodated in the most amicable manner.

"I have one favour to require of you, Mr. Dorriforth," said she, "and that is, your promise,—your solemn promise, which I know is ever sacred,—that you will not meet my Lord Frederick."

He hesitated.

"Oh, Madam," cried Sandford, "he is grown a libertine now, and I would not believe his word, if he were to give it to you."

"Then, Sir," returned Dorriforth, angrily, "you *may* believe my word, for I will keep that which I gave to *you*. I will give Lord Frederick all the restitution in my power. But, my dear Miss Milner, let not this alarm you; we may not find it convenient to meet this many a day; and most probably some fortunate explanation may prevent our meeting at all. If not, reckon but among the many duels that are fought, how few are fatal: and even in that case, how small would be the loss to society, if——" He was proceeding.



"I should ever deplore the loss!" cried Miss Milner; "on such an occasion, I could not survive the death of either."

"For my part," he replied, "I look upon my life as much forfeited to my Lord Frederick, to whom I have given a high offence, as it might in other instances have been forfeited to the offended laws of the land. Honour is the law of the polite part of the land; we know it; and when we transgress against it knowingly, we justly incur our punishment. However, Miss Milner, this affair will not be settled immediately; and I have no doubt but that all will be as you could wish. Do you think I should appear thus easy," added he, with a smile, "if I were going to be shot at by my Lord Frederick?"

"Very well!" cried Sandford, with a look that evinced he was better informed.

"You will stay within then, all this day?" said Miss Milner.

"I am engaged to dinner," he replied; "it is unlucky—I am sorry for it—but I'll be at home early in the evening."

"Stained with human blood," cried Sandford, "or yourself a corpse."

The ladies lifted up their hands. Miss Milner rose from her seat, and threw herself at her guardian's feet.

"You kneeled to me last night, I now kneel to you," she cried; "kneel, never desiring to rise again, if you persist in your intention. I am weak, I am volatile, I am indiscreet; but I have a heart from which some impressions can never, oh! never, be erased."

He endeavoured to raise her: she persisted to kneel; and here the affright, the terror, the anguish she endured, discovered to her her own sentiments—which, till that moment, she had doubted—and she continued—

"I no longer pretend to conceal my passion; I love Lord Frederick Lawnley."



Her guardian started.

"Yes, to my shame, I love him!" cried she, all emotion: "I meant to have struggled with the weakness, because I supposed it would be displeasing to you; but apprehension for his safety has taken away every power of restraint, and I beseech you to spare his life."

"This is exactly what I thought," cried Sandford, with an air of triumph.

"Good heaven!" cried Miss Woodley.

"But it is very natural," said Mrs. Horton.

"I own," said Dorriforth, (struck with amaze, and now raising her from his feet with a force that she could not resist) "I own, Miss Milner, I am greatly affected and wounded at this contradiction in your character."

"But did not I say so?" cried Sandford, interrupting him.

"However," continued he, "you may take my word, though you have deceived me in yours, that Lord Frederick's life is secure. For your sake, I would not endanger it for the universe. But let this be a warning to you."

He was proceeding with the most austere looks, and pointed language, when observing the shame, and the self-reproach that agitated her mind, he divested himself in great measure of his resentment, and said, mildly—

"Let this be a warning to you, how you deal in future with the friends who wish you well. You have hurried me into a mistake that might have cost me my life, or the life of the man you love; and thus exposed *you* to misery, more bitter than death."

"I am not worthy of your friendship, Mr. Dorriforth," said she, sobbing with grief, "and from this moment forsake me."

"No, Madam, not in the moment you first discover to me how I can make you happy."



The conversation appearing now to become of a nature in which the rest of the company could have no share whatever, they were all, except Mr. Sandford, retiring ; when Miss Milner called Miss Woodley back, saying, " Stay you with me ; I was never so unfit to be left without your friendship."

" Perhaps at present you can dispense with mine," said Dorriforth. She made no answer. He then once more assured her Lord Frederick's life was safe, and was quitting the room ; but when he recollected in what humiliation he had left her, turning towards her as he opened the door, he added—

" And be assured, Madam, that my esteem for you shall be the same as ever."

Sandford, as he followed him, bowed, and repeated the same words : " And, Madam, be assured that *my* esteem for you shall be *the same as ever*."



## CHAPTER XV.

THIS taunting reproof from Sandford made little impression upon Miss Milner, whose thoughts were all fixed on a subject of much more importance than the opinion which he entertained of her. She threw her arms about her friend the moment they were left alone, and asked, with anxiety, "What she thought of her behaviour?" Miss Woodley, who could not approve of the duplicity she had betrayed, still wished to reconcile her as much as possible to her own conduct, and replied, she "highly commended the frankness with which she had, at last, acknowledged her sentiments."

"Frankness!" cried Miss Milner, starting. "Frankness, my dear Miss Woodley! What you have just now heard me say, is all a falsehood."

"How, Miss Milner?"

"Oh, Miss Woodley," returned she, sobbing upon her bosom, "pity the agonies of my heart, my heart by nature sincere, when such are the fatal propensities it cherishes, that I must submit to the grossest falsehoods rather than reveal the truth."

"What can you mean!" cried Miss Woodley, with the strongest amazement in her face.

"Do *you* suppose I love Lord Frederick? Do you suppose I *can* love him? Oh fly, and prevent my guardian from telling him such an untruth."

"What can you mean?" repeated Miss Woodley; "I



protest you terrify me." For this inconsistency in the behaviour of Miss Milner appeared to indicate that her senses had been deranged.

"Fly," she resumed, "and prevent the inevitable ill consequence which will ensue, if Lord Frederick should be told this falsehood. It will involve us all in greater disquiet than we suffer at present."

"Then what has influenced you, my dear Miss Milner?"

"That which impels all my actions—an insurmountable instinct; a fatality, that will for ever render me the most miserable of human beings; and yet you,—even you, my dear Miss Woodley,—will not pity me."

Miss Woodley pressed her closely in her arms, and vowed, "That while she was unhappy, from whatever cause, she still would pity her."

"Go to Mr. Dorriforth, then, and prevent him from imposing upon Lord Frederick."

"But that imposition is the only means of preventing the duel," replied Miss Woodley. "The moment I have told him that your affection was but counterfeited, he will no longer refuse accepting the challenge."

"Then, at all events, I am undone," exclaimed Miss Milner, "for the duel is horrible, even beyond every thing else."

"How so?" returned Miss Woodley, "since you have declared that you do not care for my Lord Frederick?"

"But are you so blind," returned Miss Milner, with a degree of madness in her looks, "as to believe I do not care for Mr. Dorriforth? Oh! Miss Woodley! I love him with all the passion of a mistress, and with all the tenderness of a wife."

Miss Woodley at this sentence sat down; it was on a chair that was close to her—her feet could not have taken her to any other. She trembled, she was white as ashes, and



deprived of speech. Miss Milner, taking her by the hand, said—

“I know what you feel, I know what you think of me, and how much you hate and despise me. But Heaven is witness to all my struggles, nor would I, even to myself, acknowledge the shameless prepossession, till forced by a sense of his danger——”

“Silence,” cried Miss Woodley, struck with horror.

“And even now,” resumed Miss Milner, “have I not concealed it from all but you, by plunging myself into a new difficulty, from which I know not how I shall be extricated? And do I entertain a hope? No, Miss Woodley, nor ever will. But suffer me to own my folly to you, to entreat your soothing friendship to free me from my weakness. And, oh! give me your advice, to deliver me from the difficulties which surround me.”

Miss Woodley was still pale and still silent.

Education is called second nature : in the strict (but not enlarged) education of Miss Woodley, it was more powerful than the first; and the violation of oaths, persons, or things consecrated to Heaven, was, in her opinion, if not the most enormous, yet among the most terrific in the catalogue of crimes.

Miss Milner had lived so long in a family who had imbibed those opinions, that she was convinced of their force; nay, her own reason told her that solemn vows of every kind ought to be sacred; and the more she respected her guardian's understanding, the less did she call in question his religious tenets. In esteeming him, she esteemed all his notions; and among the rest, venerated those of his religion. Yet that passion, which had unhappily taken possession of her whole soul, would not have been inspired, had there not subsisted an early difference in their systems of divine faith. Had she been



early taught what were the sacred functions of a Roman ecclesiastic, though all her esteem, all her admiration, had been attracted by the qualities and accomplishments of her guardian, yet education would have given such a prohibition to her love, that she would have been precluded from it, as by that barrier which divides a sister from a brother.

This, unfortunately, was not the case ; and Miss Milner loved Dorrieforth without one conscious check to tell her she was wrong, except that which convinced her that her love would be avoided by him with detestation, and with horror.

Miss Woodley, somewhat recovered from her first surprise and sufferings—for never did her susceptible mind suffer so exquisitely—amidst all her grief and abhorrence, felt that pity was still predominant ; and, reconciled to the faults of Miss Milner by her misery, she once more looked at her with friendship, and asked, what she “could do to render her less unhappy?”

“Make me forget,” replied Miss Milner, “every moment of my life since I first saw you ; that moment was teeming with a weight of cares, under which I must labour till my death.”

“And even in death,” replied Miss Woodley, “do not hope to shake them off, If unrepented in this world—”

She was proceeding ; but the anxiety her friend endured would not suffer her to be free from the apprehension that, notwithstanding the positive assurance of her guardian, if he and Lord Frederick should meet, the duel might still take place. She therefore rang the bell, and inquired if Mr. Dorrieforth was still at home?—The answer was, “He had ridden out.” “You remember,” said Miss Woodley, “he told you he should dine from home.” This did not, how-



ever, dismiss her fears, and she despatched two servants different ways in pursuit of him, acquainting them with her suspicions, and charging them to prevent the duel. Sandford had also taken his precautions ; but though he knew the time, he did not know the exact place of their appointment, which Lord Elmwood had forgotten to inquire.

The excessive alarm which Miss Milner discovered upon this occasion was imputed by the servants, and by others who were witnesses of it, to her affection for Lord Frederick ; while none but Miss Woodley knew, or had the most distant suspicion of, the real cause.

Mrs. Horton and Miss Fenton, who were sitting together, expatiating on the duplicity of their own sex in the instance just before them, had, notwithstanding the interest of the discourse, a longing desire to break it off ; for they were impatient to see this poor frail being whom they were loading with their censure. They longed to see if she would have the confidence to look them in the face ; them, to whom she had so often protested that she had not the smallest attachment to Lord Frederick, but had accepted his attentions from motives of vanity.

These ladies heard with infinite satisfaction that dinner had been served ; but met Miss Milner at the table with a less degree of pleasure than they had expected ; for her mind was so totally abstracted from any consideration of them, that they could not discern a single blush, or confused glance, which their presence occasioned. No, she had before *them* divulged nothing of which she was ashamed ; she was only ashamed that what she had said was not true. To the bosom of Miss Woodley alone was that secret entrusted which could call a blush into her face, and before her, she *did* feel confusion ; before the gentle friend, to whom she had till this time communicated all her faults



without embarrassment, she now cast down her eyes in shame.

Soon after the dinner was removed, Lord Elmwood entered, and that gallant young nobleman declared, "Mr. Sandford had used him ill, in not permitting him to accompany his relation ; for he feared that Mr. Dorriforth would now throw himself upon the sword of Lord Frederick, without a single friend near to defend him." A rebuke from the eye of Miss Woodley, which, from this day, had a command over Miss Milner, restrained her from expressing the affright she suffered from this intimation.

Miss Fenton replied, "As to that, my Lord, I see no reason why Mr. Dorriforth and Lord Frederick should not now be friends."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Horton, "for as soon as my Lord Frederick is made acquainted with Miss Milner's confession, all differences must be reconciled."

"What confession ?" asked Lord Elmwood.

Miss Milner, to avoid hearing a repetition of that which gave her pain even to recollect, rose in order to retire into her own apartment ; but was obliged to sit down again, till she received the assistance of Lord Elmwood and her friend, who led her into her dressing-room. She reclined upon a sofa there, and though left alone with that friend, a silence followed of half-an-hour ; nor when the conversation began was the name of Dorriforth once uttered. They were grown cool and considerate, since the discovery, and both were equally fearful of naming him.

The vanity of the world, the folly of riches, the charms of retirement, and such topics engaged their discourse, but not their thoughts, for near two hours ; and the first time the word Dorriforth was spoken, was by a servant, who with alacrity opened the dressing-room door, without previously rapping, and cried, "Madam, Mr. Dorriforth."



Dorriforth immediately came in, and went eagerly to Miss Milner. Miss Woodley beheld the glow of joy and of guilt upon her face, and did not rise to give him her seat, as was her custom, when she was sitting by his ward, and he came to bring her intelligence. He therefore stood while he repeated all that had happened in his interview with Lord Frederick.

But with her gladness to see her guardian safe, she had forgot to inquire of the safety of his antagonist; of the man whom she had pretended to love so passionately—even smiles of rapture were upon her face, though Dorriforth might be returned from putting him to death. This incongruity of behaviour Miss Woodley observed, and was confounded; but Dorriforth, in whose thoughts a suspicion either of her love for him, or indifference for Lord Frederick, had no place, easily reconciled this inconsistency, and said—

“You see by my countenance that all is well, and therefore you smile on me before I tell you what has passed.”

This brought her to the recollection of her conduct, and now, with looks ill-constrained, she attempted the expression of an alarm she did not feel.

“Nay, I assure you Lord Frederick is safe,” he resumed, “and the disgrace of his blow washed entirely away, by a few drops of blood from this arm.” And he laid his hand upon his left arm, which rested in his waistcoat as a kind of sling.

She cast her eyes there, and seeing where the ball had entered the coat sleeve, she gave an involuntary scream, and reclined upon the sofa. Instead of that affectionate sympathy which Miss Woodley used to exert upon her slightest illness or affliction, she now addressed her in an un pitying tone, and said—



“Miss Milner, you have heard Lord Frederick is safe : you have therefore nothing to alarm you.”

Nor did she run to hold a smelling-bottle, or to raise her head. Her guardian seeing her near fainting, and without any assistance from her friend, was going himself to give it ; but on this Miss Woodley interfered, and, having taken her head upon her arm, assured him, “It was a weakness to which Miss Milner was very subject ; and that she would ring for her maid, who knew how to relieve her instantly with a few drops.” Satisfied with this assurance, Dorriforth left the room ; and a surgeon being come to examine his wound, he retired into his own chamber.



## CHAPTER XVI.

THE power delegated by the confidential to those intrusted with their secrets, Miss Woodley was the last person on earth to abuse ; but she was also the last, who, by an accommodating complacency, would participate in the guilt of her friend ; and there was no guilt, except that of murder, which she thought equal to the crime in question, if it was ever perpetrated. Adultery, reason would perhaps have informed her, was a more pernicious evil to society ; but to a religious mind, what sound is so horrible as sacrilege? Of vows made to God or to man, the former must weigh the heaviest. Moreover, the sin of infidelity in the married state is not a little softened, to common understandings, by its frequency ; whereas, of religious vows broken by a devotee she had never heard ; unless where the offence had been followed by such instances of divine vengeance, such miraculous punishments in this world (as well as eternal punishment in the other) as served to exemplify the wickedness.

She, who could and who did pardon Miss Milner, was the person who saw her passion in the severest light, and resolved upon every method, however harsh, to root it from her heart ; nor did she fear success, resting on the certain assurance, that however deep her love might be fixed, it would never be returned. Yet this confidence did not prevent her taking every precaution, lest Dorriforth



should come to the knowledge of it. She would not have his composed mind disturbed with such a thought—his steadfast principles so much as shaken by the imagination—nor would she be the instrument to overwhelm him with those self-reproaches which his fatal attraction, unpremeditated as it was, would still have drawn upon him.

With this plan of concealment, in which the natural modesty of Miss Milner acquiesced, there was but one effort for which this unhappy ward was not prepared; and that was an entire separation from her guardian. She had, from the first, cherished her passion without the most remote prospect of a return—she was prepared to see Dorriforth, without ever seeing him more nearly connected with her than as her guardian and friend; but not to see him at all—for *that*, she was not prepared.

But Miss Woodley reflected upon the inevitable necessity of this measure before she made the proposal; and then made it with a firmness that might have done honour to the inflexibility of Dorriforth himself.

During the few days that intervened between her open confession of a passion for Lord Frederick, and this proposed plan of separation, the utmost inconsistency appeared in the character of Miss Milner; and in order to evade a marriage with him, and conceal, at the same time, the shameful passion which lurked in her breast, she was once even on the point of declaring an attachment for Sir Edward Ashton.

In the duel which had taken place between Lord Frederick and Dorriforth, the latter had received the fire of his antagonist, but positively refused to return it; by which he had kept his promise not to endanger his lordship's life, and had reconciled Sandford, in great measure, to his behaviour—and Sandford now (his resolution once broken) no longer refused entering Miss Milner's house, but came whenever it



was convenient, though he yet avoided the mistress of it as much as possible; or shewed by every word and look, when she was present, that she was still less in his favour than she had ever been.

He visited Dorriforth on the evening of his engagement with Lord Frederick, and the next morning breakfasted with him in his own chamber; nor did Miss Milner see her guardian after his first return from that engagement before the following noon. She inquired, however, of his servant how he did, and was rejoiced to hear that his wound was but slight—yet this inquiry she durst not make before Miss Woodley.

When Dorriforth made his appearance the next day, it was evident that he had thrown from his heart a load of cares; and though they had left a languor upon his face, content was in his voice, in his manners, in every word and action. Far from seeming to retain any resentment against his ward, for the danger into which her imprudence had led him, he appeared rather to pity her indiscretion, and to wish to soothe her perturbation, which the recollection of her own conduct had evidently raised in her mind. His endeavours were successful—she was soothed every time he spoke to her; and had not the watchful eye of Miss Woodley stood guard over her inclinations, she had plainly discovered, that she was enraptured with the joy of seeing him again himself, after the danger to which he had been exposed.

These emotions, which she laboured to subdue, passed, however, the bounds of her ineffectual resistance, when at the time of her retiring after dinner, he said to her in a low voice, but such as it was meant the company should hear, “Do me the favour, Miss Milner, to call at my study some time in the evening; I have to speak with you upon business.”



She answered, "I will, Sir." And her eyes beamed with delight, in expectation of the interview.

Let not the reader, nevertheless, imagine there was in that ardent expectation one idea which the most spotless mind, in love, might not have indulged without reproach. Sincere love (at least among the delicate of the female sex) is often gratified by that degree of enjoyment, or rather forbearance, which would be torture in the pursuit of any other passion. Real, delicate, and restrained love, such as Miss Milner's, was indulged in the sight of the object only; and having bounded her wishes by her hopes, the height of her happiness was limited to a conversation, in which no other but themselves took a part.

Miss Woodley was one of those who heard the appointment, but the only one who conceived with what sensation it was received.

While the ladies remained in the same room with Dorriforth, Miss Milner had thought of little, except of him. As soon as they withdrew into another apartment, she remembered Miss Woodley; and, turning her head suddenly, saw her friend's face imprinted with suspicion and displeasure: this at first was painful to her—but recollecting, that within a couple of hours she was to meet her guardian alone—to speak to him, and hear him speak to her only—every other thought was absorbed in that one, and she considered with indifference the uneasiness or the anger of her friend.

Miss Milner, to do justice to her heart, did not wish to beguile Dorriforth into the snares of love. Could any supernatural power have endowed her with the means, and at the same time have shewn to her the ills that must arise from such an effect of her charms, she had assuredly virtue enough to have declined the conquest; but, without inquiring what she proposed, she never saw him, without



previously endeavouring to look more attractive than she would have desired before any other person. And now, without listening to the thousand exhortations that spoke in every feature of Miss Woodley, she flew to a looking-glass, to adjust her dress in a manner that she thought most enchanting.

Time stole away, and the time of going to her guardian arrived. In his presence, unsupported by the presence of any other, every grace that she had practised, every look that she had borrowed to set off her charms, was annihilated, and she became a native beauty, with the artless arguments of reason, only, for her aid. Awed thus by his power, from everything but what she really was, she never was perhaps half so bewitching, as in those timid, respectful, and embarrassed moments she passed alone with him. He caught at those times her respect, her diffidence, nay, even her embarrassment; and never would one word of anger pass on either side.

On the present occasion, he first expressed the high satisfaction that she had given him by at length revealing to him the real state of her mind.

"And when I take everything into consideration, Miss Milner," added he, "I rejoice that your sentiments happen to be such as you have owned. For, although my Lord Frederick is not the very man I could have wished for your perfect happiness, yet, in the state of human perfection and human happiness, you might have fixed your affections with perhaps less propriety; and still, where my unwillingness to have thwarted your inclinations might not have permitted me to contend with them."

Not a word of reply did this speech demand; but, if it had, not a word could she have given.

"And now, Madam, the reason of my desire to speak with you is, to know the means you think most proper to



pursue, in order to acquaint Lord Frederick, that notwithstanding this late repulse, there are hopes of your partiality in his favour."

"Defer the explanation," she replied eagerly.

"I beg your pardon—it cannot be. Besides, how can you indulge a disposition thus unpitying? Even so ardently did I desire to render the man who loves you happy, that though he came armed against my life, had I not reflected, that previous to our engagement it would appear like fear, and the means of bartering for his forgiveness,—I should have revealed your sentiments the moment I had seen him. When the engagement was over, I was too impatient to acquaint you with his safety, to think then of gratifying him. And, indeed, the delicacy of the declaration, after the many denials which you have no doubt given him, should be considered. I therefore consult your opinion upon the manner in which it shall be made."

"Mr. Dorriforth, can you allow nothing to the moments of surprise, and that pity which the fate impending inspired? and which might urge me to express myself of Lord Frederick in a manner my cooler thoughts will not warrant?"

"There was nothing in your expressions, my dear Miss Milner, the least equivocal. If you were off your guard when you pleaded for Lord Frederick, as I believe you were, you said more sincerely what you thought; and no discreet, or rather indiscreet, attempts to retract, can make me change these sentiments."

"I am very sorry," she replied, confused and trembling.

"Why sorry? Come, give me commission to reveal your partiality. I'll not be too hard upon you. A hint from me will do. Hope is ever apt to interpret the slightest words to its own use, and a lover's hope is, beyond all others, sanguine."



"I never gave Lord Frederick hope."

"But you never plunged him into despair."

"His pursuit intimates that I never have, but he has no other proof."

"However light and frivolous you have been upon frivolous subjects, yet I must own, Miss Milner, that I did expect when a case of this importance came seriously before you, you would have discovered a proper stability in your behaviour."

"I do, Sir; and it was only when I was affected with a weakness, which arose from accident, that I betrayed inconsistency."

"You then assert again, that you have no affection for my Lord Frederick?"

"Not enough to become his wife."

"You are alarmed at marriage, and I do not wonder you should be so; it shews a prudent foresight which does you honour—but, my dear, are there no dangers in a single state? If I may judge, Miss Milner, there are many more to a young lady of your accomplishments, than if you were under the protection of a husband."

"My father, Mr. Dorriforth, thought your protection sufficient."

"But that protection was rather to direct your choice, than to be the cause of your not choosing at all. Give me leave to point out an observation which, perhaps, I have too frequently made before, but upon this occasion I must intrude it once again. Miss Fenton is its object—her fortune is inferior to yours, her personal attractions are less——"

Here the powerful glow of joy, and of gratitude, for an opinion so negligently, and yet so sincerely expressed, flew to Miss Milner's face, neck, and even to her hands and fingers; the blood mounted to every part of her skin that



was visible, for not a fibre but felt the secret transport, that Dorriforth though her more beautiful than the beautiful Miss Fenton.

If he observed her blushes, he was unsuspecting of the cause, and went on :—

“There is, besides, in the temper of Miss Fenton, a sedateness that might with less hazard ensure *her* safety in an unmarried life ; and yet she very properly thinks it her duty, as she does not mean to seclude herself by any vows to the contrary, to become a wife, and, in obedience to the counsel of her friends, will be married within a very few weeks.”

“Miss Fenton may marry from obedience : I never will.”

“You mean to say, that love shall alone induce you.”

“I do.”

“If you would point out a subject upon which I am the least able to reason, and on which my sentiments, such as they are, are formed only from theory, and even there, more cautioned than instructed, it is the subject of love. And yet, even that little which I know, tells me, without a doubt, that what you said yesterday, pleading for Lord Frederick’s life, was the result of the most violent and tender love.”

“The *little you know*, then, Mr. Dorriforth, has deceived you ; had you *known more*, you would have judged otherwise.”

“I submit to the merit of your reply ; but without allowing me to judge at all, I will appeal to those who were present with me.”

“Are Mrs. Horton and Mr. Sandford to be the connoisseurs.”

“No ; I’ll appeal to Miss Fenton and Miss Woodley.”

“And yet, I believe,” replied she with a smile, “I believe theory must only be the judge even there.”



"Then from all you have said, Madam, on this occasion, I am to conclude that you still refuse to marry Lord Frederick?"

"You are."

"And you submit never to see him again?"

"I do."

"All you then said to me yesterday was false?"

"I was not mistress of myself at the time."

"Therefore it was truth! For shame, for shame!"

At that moment the door opened, and Mr. Sandford walked in—he started back on seeing Miss Milner, and was going away; but Dorriforth called to him to stay, and said with warmth—

"Tell me, Mr. Sandford, by what power, by what persuasion, I can prevail upon Miss Milner to confide in me as her friend; to lay her heart open, and credit mine when I declare to her that I have no view in all the advice I give to her but her immediate welfare."

"Mr. Dorriforth, you know my opinion of that lady," replied Sandford; "it has been formed ever since my first acquaintance with her, and it continues the same."

"But instruct me how I am to inspire her with confidence," returned Dorriforth; "how I am to impress her with a sense of that which is for her advantage?"

"You can work no miracles," replied Sandford; "you are not holy enough."

"And yet my ward," answered Dorriforth, "appears to be acquainted with that mystery; for what but the force of a miracle can induce her to contradict to-day, what before you, and several other witnesses, she positively acknowledged yesterday?"

"Do you call that miraculous?" cried Sandford; "the miracle had been if she had *not* done so; for did she not yesterday contradict what she acknowledged the day before?"



—and will she not to-morrow disavow what she says to-day?”

“I wish that she may,” replied Dorriforth, mildly ; for he saw the tears flowing down her face at the rough and severe manner in which Sandford had spoken, and he began to feel for her uneasiness.

“I beg pardon,” cried Sandford, “for speaking so rudely to the mistress of the house. I have no business here, I know ; but where *you* are, Mr. Dorriforth, unless I am turned out, I shall always think it my duty to come.”

Miss Milner courtesied, as much as to say, he was welcome to come. He continued—

“I was to blame, that upon a nice punctilio, I left you so long without my visits, and without my counsel ; in that time, you have run the hazard of being murdered, and, what is worse, of being excommunicated ; for had you been so rash as to return your opponent’s fire, not all my interest at Rome would have obtained remission of the punishment.”

Miss Milner, through all her tears, could not now restrain her laughter. On which he resumed :—

“And here do I venture, like a missionary among savages ; but if I can only save you from their scalping knives—from the miseries that lady is preparing for you—I am rewarded.”

Sandford spoke this with great fervour, and the offence of her love never appeared to her in so tremendous a point of view, as when thus, unknowingly, alluded to by him.

“*The miseries that lady is preparing for you,*” hung upon her ears like the notes of a raven, and sounded equally ominous. The words “*murder*” and “*excommunication*” he had likewise uttered ; all the fatal effects of sacrilegious love. Frightful superstitions struck her to the heart,



and she could scarcely avoid falling down under their oppression.

Dorrieforth beheld the difficulty she had in sustaining herself, and with the utmost tenderness went towards her; and supporting her, said, "I beg your pardon; I invited you hither with a far different intention than your uneasiness; and be assured——"

Sandford was beginning to speak, when Dorrieforth resumed—"Hold, Mr. Sandford, the lady is under my protection, and I know not whether it is not requisite that you should apologize to her, and to me, for what you have already said."

"You asked my opinion, or I had not given it you; would you have me, like *her*, speak what I do not think?"

"Say no more, Sir," cried Dorrieforth; and, leading her kindly to the door, as if to defend her from his malice, told her, "He would take another opportunity of renewing the subject."



## CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN Dorriforth was alone with Sandford, he explained to him what before he had only hinted ; and this learned Jesuit frankly confessed, "That the mind of woman was far above, or rather beneath, his comprehension." It was so, indeed, for with all his penetration—and few even of that school had more—he had not yet penetrated into the recesses of Miss Milner's mind.

Miss Woodley—to whom she repeated all that had passed between herself, her guardian, and Sandford—took this moment, in the agitation of her spirits, to alarm her still more by prophetic insinuations ; and at length represented to her here, for the first time, the necessity, "That Mr. Dorriforth and she no longer should remain under the same roof." This was like the stroke of sudden death to Miss Milner, and, clinging to life, she endeavoured to avert the blow by prayers and by promises. Her friend loved her too sincerely to be prevailed upon.

"But in what manner can I accomplish the separation?" cried she, "for till I marry we are obliged, by my father's request, to live in the same house."

"Miss Milner," answered Miss Woodley, "much as I respect the will of a dying man, I regard your and Mr. Dorriforth's present and eternal happiness much more ; and it is my resolution that you *shall part*. If *you* will not contrive the means, that duty falls on me ; and, without any invention, I see the measure at once."



"What is it?" cried Miss Milner, eagerly.

"I will reveal to Mr. Dorriforth, without hesitation, the real state of your heart; which your present inconsistency of conduct will but too readily confirm."

"You would not plunge me into so much shame, into so much anguish?" cried she, distractedly.

"No," replied Miss Woodley, "not for the world, if you will separate from him by any mode of your own; but that you *shall* separate is my determination; and in spite of all your sufferings, this shall be the expedient, unless you instantly agree to some other."

"Good heaven, Miss Woodley! Is this your friendship?"

"Yes, and the truest friendship I have to bestow. Think what a task I undertake for your sake and his, when I condemn myself to explain to him your weakness. What astonishment! what confusion! what remorse, do I foresee painted upon his face! I hear him call you by the harshest names, and behold him fly from your sight for ever, as from an object of his detestation."

"Oh, spare the dreadful picture. Fly from my sight for ever! Detest my name! Oh! my dear Miss Woodley, let but his friendship for me still remain, and I will consent to any thing. You may command me. I will go away from him directly; but let us part in friendship. Oh! without the friendship of Mr. Dorriforth, life would be a heavy burden indeed."

Miss Woodley immediately began to contrive schemes for their separation; and, with all her invention alive on the subject, the following was the only natural one that she could form.

Miss Milner, in a letter to her distant relation at Bath, was to complain of the melancholy of a country life, which she was to say her guardian imposed upon her; and she was



to entreat the lady to send a pressing invitation that she would pass a few months at her house ; this invitation was to be laid before Dorriforth for his approbation, and the two ladies were to enforce it, by expressing their earnest wishes for his consent. This plan having been properly regulated, the necessary letter was sent to Bath, and Miss Woodley waited with patience, but with a watchful guard upon the conduct of her friend, till the answer should arrive.

During this interim a tender and complaining epistle from Lord Frederick was delivered to Miss Milner, to which, as he received no answer, he prevailed upon his uncle, with whom he resided, to wait upon her, and obtain a verbal reply ; for he still flattered himself that fear of her guardian's anger, or perhaps his interception of the letter which he had sent, was the sole cause of her apparent indifference.

The old gentleman was introduced both to Miss Milner and to Mr. Dorriforth, but received from each an answer so explicit, that it left his nephew no longer in doubt but that all farther pursuit was vain..

Sir Edward Ashton about this time also submitted to a formal dismissal ; and had then the mortification to reflect, that he was bestowing upon the object of his affections the tenderest proof of his regard, by absenting himself entirely from her society.

Upon this serious and certain conclusion to the hopes of Lord Frederick, Dorriforth was more astonished than ever at the conduct of his ward. He had once thought that her behaviour in this respect was ambiguous, but since her confession of a passion for that nobleman, he had no doubt but that in the end she would become his wife. He lamented to find himself mistaken, and thought it proper now to condemn her caprice, not merely in words, but by the general tenor of his behaviour. He consequently became



more reserved, and more austere than he had been since his first acquaintance with her ; for his manners, not from design, but imperceptibly to himself, had been softened since he became her guardian, by that tender respect which he had uniformly paid to the object of his protection.

Notwithstanding the severity he now assumed, his ward, in the prospect of parting from him, grew melancholy. Miss Woodley's love to her friend rendered her little otherwise ! and Dorriforth's peculiar gravity—frequently, rigour—could not but make their whole party less cheerful than it had been. Lord Elmwood, too, at this time was lying dangerously ill of a fever. Miss Fenton, of course, was as much in sorrow as her nature would permit her to be ; and both Sandford and Dorriforth were in extreme concern upon his Lordship's account.

In this posture of affairs, the letter of invitation arrived from Lady Luneham, at Bath. It was shewn to Dorriforth ; and to prove to his ward that he is so much offended, as no longer to feel that excessive interest in her concerns which he once felt, he gives an opinion on the subject with indifference—he desires “Miss Milner will do what she herself thinks proper.” Miss Woodley instantly accepts this permission, writes back, and appoints the day upon which her friend means to set off for the visit.

Miss Milner is wounded at the heart by the cold and unkind manners of her guardian, but dares not take one step to retrieve his opinion. Alone, or to her friend, she sighs and weeps. He discovers her sorrow, and is doubtful whether the departure of Lord Frederick from that part of the country is not the cause.

When the time she was to set out to Bath was only two days off, the behaviour of Dorriforth took, by degrees, its usual form, if not a greater share of polite and tender atten-



tion than ever. It was the first time he had parted from Miss Milner since he became her guardian, and he felt upon the occasion a reluctance. He had been angry with her; he had shewn her that he was so, and he now began to wish that he had not. She is not happy (he considered within himself); every word and action declares she is not: I may have been too severe, and added, perhaps, to her uneasiness. "At least we will part on good terms," said he. "Indeed, my regard for her is such, I cannot part otherwise."

She soon discerned his returning kindness, and it was a gentle tie that would have fastened her to that spot for ever, but for the firm resistance of Miss Woodley.

"What will the absence of a few months effect?" said she, pleading her own cause. "At the end of a few months, at farthest, he will expect me back, and where then will be the merit of this separation?"

"In that time," replied Miss Woodley, "we may find some method to make it longer." To this she listened with a kind of despair, but uttered, she "was resigned," and she prepared for her departure.

Dorriforth was all anxiety that every circumstance of her journey should be commodious. He was eager she should be happy; and he was eager she should see that he entirely forgave her. He would have gone part of the way with her, but for the extreme illness of Lord Elmwood, in whose chamber he passed most of the day, and he slept in Elmwood House every night.

On the morning of her journey, when Dorriforth gave his hand and conducted Miss Milner to the carriage, all the way he led her she could not restrain her tears; which increased, as he parted from her, to convulsive sobs. He was affected by her grief; and though he had previously bidden her farewell, he drew her gently on one side, and said, with the tenderest concern, "My dear Miss Milner, we part friends?



I hope we do? On my side, depend upon it, that I regret nothing so much at our separation as having ever given you a moment's pain."

"I believe so," was all she could utter ; for she hastened from him lest his discerning eye should discover the cause of the weakness which thus overcame her. But her apprehensions were groundless ; the rectitude of his own heart was a bar to the suspicion of hers. He once more kindly bade her adieu, and the carriage drove away.

Miss Fenton and Miss Woodley accompanied her part of the journey, about thirty miles, when they were met by Sir Henry and Lady Luneham. Here was a parting nearly as affecting as that between her and her guardian.

Miss Woodley, who, for several weeks, had treated her friend with a rigidness she herself hardly supposed was in her nature, now bewailed that she had done so, implored her forgiveness, promised to correspond with her punctually, and to omit no opportunity of giving her every consolation short of cherishing her fatal passion ; but in that, and that only, was the heart of Miss Milner to be consoled.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Miss Milner arrived at Bath, she thought it the most altered place she had ever seen. She was mistaken—it was herself that was changed.

The walks were melancholy, the company insipid, the ball-room fatiguing ; for she had left behind all that could charm or please her.

Though she found herself much less happy than when she was at Bath before, yet she felt that she would not, even to enjoy all that past happiness, be again reduced to the being she was at that period. Thus does the lover consider the extinction of his passion with the same horror as the libertine looks upon annihilation ; the one would rather live hereafter, though in all the tortures described as constituting his future state, than cease to exist ; so there are no tortures which a lover would not suffer, rather than cease to love.

In the wide prospect of sadness before her, Miss Milner's fancy caught hold of the only comfort which presented itself ; and this, faint as it was, in the total absence of every other, her imagination painted to her as excessive. The comfort was a letter from Miss Woodley—a letter, in which the subject of her love would most assuredly be mentioned, and, in whatever terms, it would still be the means of delight.

A letter arrived. She devoured it with her eyes. The post-mark denoting from whence it came, the name of “Milner



Lodge" written on the top, were all sources of pleasure, and she read slowly every line it contained, to procrastinate the pleasing expectation she enjoyed, till she should arrive at the name of Dorriforth. At last her impatient eye caught the word, three lines beyond the place she was reading ; irresistibly she skipped over those lines, and fixed on the point to which she was attracted.

Miss Woodley was cautious in her indulgence ; she made the slightest mention possible of Dorriforth ; saying only, "He was extremely concerned, and even dejected, at the little hope there was of his cousin, Lord Elmwood's, recovery." Short and trivial as this passage was, it was still more important to Miss Milner than any other in the letter. She read it again and again, considered, and reflected upon it. Dejected, thought she, what does that word exactly mean? Did I ever see Mr. Dorriforth dejected? How, I wonder, does he look in that state? Thus did she muse, while the cause of his dejection, though a most serious one, and pathetically described by Miss Woodley, scarce arrested her attention. She ran over with haste the account of Lord Elmwood's state of health ; she certainly pitied him while she thought of him, but she did not think of him long. To die was a hard fate for a young nobleman just in possession of his immense fortune, and on the eve of marriage with a beautiful young woman ; but Miss Milner thought that an abode in Heaven might be still better than all this, and she had no doubt but that his Lordship would be an inhabitant there. The forlorn state of Miss Fenton ought to have been a subject for her compassion, but she knew that lady had resignation to bear any lot with patience, and that a trial of her fortitude might be more flattering to her vanity than to be Countess of Elmwood ; in a word, she saw no one's misfortunes equal to her own, because she knew no one so little able to bear misfortune.



She replied to Miss Woodley's letter, and dwelt very long on that subject which her friend had passed over lightly; this was another indulgence; and this epistolary intercourse was now the only enjoyment she possessed. From Bath she paid several visits with Lady Luneham—all were alike tedious and melancholy.

But her guardian wrote to her, and, though it was on a topic of sorrow, the letter gave her joy. The sentiments it expressed were merely commonplace, yet she valued them as the dearest effusions of friendship and affection; and her hands trembled, and her heart beat with rapture while she wrote the answer, though she knew it would not be received by him with one emotion like those which she experienced. In her second letter to Miss Woodley, she prayed like a person insane to be taken home from confinement, and like a lunatic protested, in sensible language, she "had no disorder." But her friend replied, "That very declaration proves its violence." And she assured her, nothing less than placing her affections elsewhere should induce her to believe but that she was incurable.

The third letter from Milner Lodge brought the news of Lord Elmwood's death. Miss Woodley was exceedingly affected by this event, and said little else on any other subject. Miss Milner was shocked when she read the words, "He is dead," and instantly thought,—

"How transient are all sublunary things! Within a few years *I* shall be dead, and how happy will it then be if I have resisted every temptation to the alluring pleasures of this life!" The happiness of a peaceful death occupied her contemplation for near an hour; but at length every virtuous and pious sentiment this meditation inspired served but to remind her of the many sentences she had heard from her guardian's lips upon the same subject—her thoughts were again fixed on him, and she could think of nothing besides.



In a short time after this her health became impaired from the indisposition of her mind; she languished, and was once in imminent danger. During a slight delirium of her fever Miss Woodley's name and her guardian's were incessantly repeated. Lady Luneham sent them immediate word of this, and they both hastened to Bath, and arrived there just as the violence and danger of her disorder had ceased. As soon as she became perfectly collected, her first care, knowing the frailty of her heart, was to inquire what she had uttered while delirious. Miss Woodley, who was by her bedside, begged her not to be alarmed on that account, and assured her she knew from all her attendants that she had only spoken with a friendly remembrance (as was really the case) of those persons who were dear to her.

She wished to know whether her guardian was come to see her, but she had not the courage to ask before her friend; and she, in her turn, was afraid by the too sudden mention of his name to discompose her. Her maid, however, after some little time, entered the chamber and whispered Miss Woodley. Miss Milner asked inquisitively what she said.

The maid replied softly, "Lord Elmwood, Madam, wishes to come and see you for a few moments, if you will allow him."

At this reply Miss Milner stared wildly.

"I thought," said she—"I thought Lord Elmwood had been dead—are my senses disordered still?"

"No, my dear," answered Miss Woodley; "it is the present Lord Elmwood who wishes to see you; he whom you left ill when you came hither *is* dead."

"And who is the present Lord Elmwood?" she asked.

Miss Woodley, after a short hesitation, replied, "Your guardian."

"And so he is," cried Miss Milner. "He is the next heir. I had forgot. But is it possible that he is here?"



"Yes," returned Miss Woodley, with a grave voice and manner, to moderate that glow of satisfaction which for a moment sparkled even in her languid eye and blushed over her pallid countenance—"yes; as he heard you were ill, he thought it right to come and see you."

"He is very good," she answered, and the tear started in her eyes.

"Would you please to see his Lordship?" asked her maid.

"Not yet, not yet," she replied; "let me recollect myself first." And she looked with a timid doubt upon her friend to ask if it was proper."

Miss Woodley could hardly support this humble reference to her judgment from the wan face of the poor invalid, and, taking her by the hand, whispered, "You shall do what you please." In a few minutes Lord Elmwood was introduced.

To those who sincerely love, every change of situation or circumstances in the object beloved appears an advantage. So the acquisition of a title and estate was, in Miss Milner's eye, an inestimable advantage to her guardian; not on account of their real value, but that any change, instead of diminishing her passion, would have served only to increase it—even a change to the utmost poverty.

When he entered, the sight of him seemed to be too much for her, and, after the first glance, she turned her head away. The sound of his voice encouraged her to look once more, and then she riveted her eyes upon him.

"It is impossible, my dear Miss Milner," he gently whispered, "to say what joy I feel that your disorder has subsided."

But though it was impossible to say, it was possible to *look* what he felt, and his looks expressed his feelings. In the zeal of those sensations he laid hold of her hand and held it between his. This he did not himself know; but she did.



"You have prayed for me, my Lord, I make no doubt?" said she, and smiled, as if thanking him for those prayers.

"Fervently, ardently!" returned he; and the fervency with which he had prayed spoke in every feature.

"But I am a Protestant, you know; and if I had died such, do you believe I should have gone to heaven?"

"Most assuredly. That would not have prevented you."

"But Mr. Sandford does not think so."

"He must; for he hopes to go there himself."

To keep her guardian with her, Miss Milner seemed inclined to converse; but her solicitous friend gave Lord Elmwood a look which implied that it might be injurious to her, and he retired.

They had only one more interview before he left the place, at which Miss Milner was capable of sitting up. He was with her, however, but a very short time, some necessary concerns relative to his late kinsman's affairs calling him in haste to London. Miss Woodley continued with her friend until she saw her entirely reinstated in health, during which time her guardian was frequently the subject of their private conversation; and upon those occasions Miss Milner sometimes brought Miss Woodley to acknowledge that, could Mr. Dorriforth have possibly foreseen the early death of the last Lord Elmwood, it had been more for the honour of his religion (as that ancient title would now after him become extinct) if he had preferred marriage vows to those of celibacy.



## CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN the time for Miss Woodley's departure arrived, Miss Milner entreated earnestly to accompany her home, and made the most solemn promises that she would guard not only her behaviour, but her very thoughts, within the limitation her friend should prescribe. Miss Woodley at length yielded thus far: that as soon as Lord Elmwood had set out on his journey to Italy, where she had heard him say that he should soon be obliged to go, she would no longer deny her the pleasure of returning; and if, after the long absence which must consequently take place between him and her, she could positively affirm the suppression of her passion had been the happy result, she would then take her word, and risk the danger of seeing them once more reside together.

This concession having been obtained, they parted; and as winter was now far advanced, Miss Woodley returned to her aunt's house in town, from whence Mrs. Horton was, however, preparing to remove in order to superintend Lord Elmwood's house, which had been occupied by the late Earl, in Grosvenor Square; and her niece was to accompany her.

If Lord Elmwood was not desirous that Miss Milner should conclude her visit and return to his protection, it was partly from the multiplicity of affairs in which he was at this time engaged, and partly from having Mr. Sandford now entirely placed with him as his chaplain; for he dreaded that, living in the same house, their natural antipathy might be in-



creased even to aversion. Upon this account he once thought of advising Mr. Sandford to take up his abode elsewhere; but the great pleasure he took in his society, joined to the bitter mortification he knew such a proposal would be to his friend, would not suffer him to make it.

Miss Milner all this time was not thinking upon those she hated, but on those she loved. Sandford never came into her thoughts, while the image of Lord Elmwood never left them. One morning, as she sat talking to Lady Lunham on various subjects, but thinking alone on him, Sir Harry Lunham, with another gentleman, a Mr. Fleetmond, came in, and the conversation turned upon the improbability there had been, at the present Lord Elmwood's birth, that he should ever inherit the title and estate which had now fallen to him; "And," said Mr. Fleetmond, "independently of rank and fortune, this unexpected occurrence must be matter of infinite joy to Mr. Dorriforth."

"No," answered Sir Harry, "independently of rank and fortune, it must be a motive of concern to him; for he must now regret beyond measure his folly in taking priest's orders—thus depriving himself of the hopes of an heir, so that the title at his death will be lost."

"By no means," replied Mr. Fleetmond. "He may yet have an heir; for he will certainly marry."

"Marry!" cried the baronet.

"Yes," answered the other, "it was that I meant by the joy it might probably give him, beyond the possession of his estate and title."

"How be married?" said Lady Lunham. "Has he not taken a vow never to marry?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Fleetmond; "but there are no *religious* vows from which the Sovereign Pontiff at Rome cannot grant a dispensation; as those commandments which are made by the Church the Church has always the power to revoke;



and when it is for the general good of religion, His Holiness thinks it incumbent on him to remit all penalties for their non-observance. Certainly it is for the honour of the Catholics that this earldom should continue in a Catholic family. In short, I'll venture to lay a wager my Lord Elmwood is married within a year."

Miss Milner, who listened with attention, feared she was in a dream, or deceived by the pretended knowledge of Mr. Fleetmond, who might know nothing. Yet all that he had said was very probable; and he was himself a Roman Catholic, so that he must be well informed on the subject upon which he spoke. If she had heard the direst news that ever sounded in the ear of the most susceptible of mortals, the agitation of her mind and person could not have been stronger. She felt, while every word was speaking, a chill through all her veins—a pleasure too exquisite not to bear along with it the sensation of exquisite pain; of which she was so sensible, that for a few moments it made her wish that she had not heard the intelligence, though very soon after she would not but have heard it for the world.

As soon as she had recovered from her first astonishment and joy, she wrote to Miss Woodley an exact account of what she had heard, and received this answer:—

"I am sorry anybody should have given you this piece of information, because it was a task in executing which I had promised myself extreme satisfaction; but from the fear that your health was not yet strong enough to support, without some danger, the burden of hopes which I knew would, upon this occasion, press upon you, I deferred my communication, and it has been anticipated. Yet, as you seem in doubt as to the reality of what you have been told, perhaps this confirmation of it may fall very little short of the first news; especially when it is enforced by my request,



that you will come to us as soon as you can with propriety leave Lady Luneham.

“Come, my dear Miss Milner, and find in your once rigid monitor, a faithful confidante. I will no longer threaten to disclose a secret you have trusted me with, but leave it to the wisdom, or sensibility of *his* heart (who is now to penetrate into the hearts of our sex, in search of one that may beat in unison with his own) to find the secret out. I no longer condemn, but congratulate you on your passion; and will assist you with all my advice and my earnest wishes, that it may obtain a return.”

This letter was another of those excruciating pleasures, that almost reduced Miss Milner to the grave. Her appetite forsook her; and she vainly endeavoured, for several nights, to close her eyes. She thought so much upon the prospect of accomplishing her hopes, that she could admit no other idea; not even invent one probable excuse for leaving Lady Luneham before the appointed time, which was then at the distance of two months. She wrote to Miss Woodley to beg her contrivance, to reproach her for keeping the intelligence so long from her, and to thank her for having revealed it in so kind a manner at last. She begged also to be acquainted how Mr. Dorriforth (for still she called him by that name) spoke and thought of this sudden change in his prospects.

Miss Woodley's reply was a summons for her to town upon some pretended business, which she avoided explaining, but which entirely silenced Lady Luneham's entreaties for her stay.

To her question concerning Lord Elmwood she answered, “It is a subject on which he seldom speaks—he appears just the same he ever did, nor could you by any part of his conduct conceive that any such change had taken place.” Miss Milner exclaimed to herself, “I am glad he is not



altered—if his words, looks, or manners, were anything different from what they formerly were, I should not like him so well.” And just the reverse would have been the case, had Miss Woodley sent her word he was changed. The day for her leaving Bath was fixed; she expected it with rapture, but before its arrival, she sank under the care of expectation; and when it came, was so much indisposed as to be obliged to defer her journey for a week.

At length she found herself in London—in the house of her guardian—and that guardian no longer bound to a single life, but *enjoined* to marry. He appeared in her eyes, as in Miss Woodley’s, the same as ever; or perhaps more endearing than ever, as it was the first time she had beheld him with hope. Mr. Sandford did *not* appear the same; yet he was in reality as surly and as disrespectful in his behaviour to her as usual; but she did not observe, or she did not feel his morose temper as heretofore—he seemed amiable, mild, and gentle; at least this was the happy medium through which her self-complacent mind began to see him; for good humour, like the jaundice, makes every one of its own complexion.



## CHAPTER XX.

LORD ELMWOOD was preparing to go abroad, for the purpose of receiving in form the dispensation from his vows; it was, however, a subject he seemed carefully to avoid speaking upon; and when by any accident he was obliged to mention it, it was without any marks either of satisfaction or concern.

Miss Milner's pride began to be alarmed. While he was Mr. Dorriforth, and confined to a single life, his indifference to her charms was rather an honourable than a reproachful trait in his character, and in reality, she admired him for the insensibility. But on the eve of being at liberty, and on the eve of making his choice, she was offended that *that* choice was not immediately fixed upon her. She had been accustomed to receive the devotion of every man who saw her, and not to obtain it from the man from whom, of all others, she most wished it, was cruelly humiliating. She complained to Miss Woodley, who advised her to have patience; but that was one of the virtues in which she was least practised.

Nevertheless, encouraged by her friend in the commendable desire of gaining the affections of him, who possessed all her own, she left no means unattempted for the conquest; but she began with too great a certainty of success, not to be sensible of the deepest mortification in the disappointment—nay, she now anticipated disappointment, as she



had before anticipated success; by turns feeling the keenest emotions from hope and from despair.

As these passions alternately governed her, she was alternately in spirits or dejected; in good or in ill humour; and the vicissitudes of her prospect at length gave to her behaviour an air of caprice, which not all her follies had till now produced. This was not the way to secure the affections of Lord Elmwood; she knew it was not, and before him she was under some restriction. Sandford observed this, and without reserve, added to the list of her other failings, hypocrisy. It was plain to see that Mr. Sandford esteemed her less and less every day; and as he was the person who most influenced the opinion of her guardian, he became to her, very soon, an object not merely of dislike, but of abhorrence.

These mutual sentiments were discoverable in every word and action, while they were in each other's company; but still, in his absence, Miss Milner's good nature, and total freedom from malice, never suffered her to utter a sentence injurious to his interest. Sandford's charity did not extend thus far; and speaking of her with severity one evening while she was at the opera, "His meaning," as he said, "but to caution her guardian against her faults," Lord Elmwood replied—

"There is one fault, however, Mr. Sandford, I cannot lay to her charge."

"And what is that, my Lord?" cried Sandford, eagerly. "What is that one fault, which Miss Milner has not?"

"I never," replied Lord Elmwood, "heard Miss Milner, in your absence, utter a syllable to your disadvantage."

"She dares not, my Lord, because she is in fear of you; and she knows you would not suffer it."

"She, then," answered his Lordship, "pays me a much



higher compliment than you do; for you freely censure *her*, and yet imagine I *will* suffer it."

"My lord," replied Sandford, "I am undeceived now, and shall never take that liberty again."

As Lord Elmwood always treated Sandford with the utmost respect, he began to fear he had been deficient upon this occasion; and the disposition which had induced him to take his ward's part, was likely, in the end, to prove unfavourable to her; for perceiving that Sandford was offended at what had passed, as the only means of atonement, he began himself to lament her volatile and captious propensities; in which lamentation, Sandford, now forgetting his affront, joined with the heartiest concurrence, adding—

"You, Sir, having at present other cares to employ your thoughts, ought to insist upon her marrying, or retiring wholly into the country."

She returned home just as this conversation was finished, and Sandford, the moment she entered, rang for his candle to retire. Miss Woodley, who had been at the opera with Miss Milner, cried,—

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford, are you not well, you are going to leave us so early?"

Miss Milner, who never listened to complaints without sympathy, rose immediately from the chair on which she had just taken her seat, saying—

"I think I never heard you, Mr. Sandford, complain of indisposition before. Will you accept of my specific for the headache? Indeed it is a certain relief—I'll fetch it instantly."

She went hastily out of the room, and returned with a bottle, which, she assured him, "was a present from Lady Luneham, and would certainly cure him." And she pressed it upon him with such an anxious earnestness, that with all his churlishness he could not refuse taking it.



This was but a common-place civility, such as is paid by one enemy to another every day; but the *manner* was the material part. The unaffected concern, the attention, the good will, she demonstrated in this little incident, was that which made it remarkable; and which immediately took from Lord Elmwood the displeasure to which he had been just before provoked, or rather transformed it into a degree of admiration. Even Sandford was not insensible to her kindness, and in return, when he left the room, "wished her a good night."

To her and Miss Woodley, who had not been witnesses of the preceding conversation, what she had done appeared of no merit; but to the mind of Lord Elmwood, the merit was infinite; and upon the departure of Sandford, he began to be unusually cheerful. He first pleasantly reproached the ladies for not offering him a place in their box at the opera.

"Would you have gone, my Lord?" asked Miss Milner, highly delighted.

"Certainly," returned he, "had you invited me."

"Then from this day I give you a general invitation; nor shall any other company be admitted but those whom you approve."

"I am very much obliged to you," said he.

"And you," continued she, "who have been accustomed only to church-music, will be more than any one enchanted with hearing the softer music of love."

"What ravishing pleasures you are preparing for me!" returned he. "I know not whether my weak senses will be able to support them!"

She had her eyes upon him when he spoke this, and she discovered in his, that were fixed upon her, a sensibility unexpected—a kind of fascination which enticed her to look on, while her eyelids fell involuntarily before its mighty force, and a thousand blushes crowded over her face.



He was struck with these sudden signals ; hastily recalled his former countenance, and stopped the conversation.

Miss Woodley, who had been a silent observer for some time, now thought a word or two from her would be acceptable rather than troublesome.

"And pray, my Lord," said she, "when do you go to France?"

"To Italy, you mean. I shall not go at all," said he. "My superiors are very indulgent, for they dispense with all my duties. I ought and I meant to have gone abroad; but, as a variety of concerns require my presence in England, every necessary ceremony has taken place here."

"Then your Lordship is no longer in orders?" said Miss Woodley.

"No; they have been resigned these five days."

"My Lord, I give you joy," said Miss Milner.

He thanked her, but added with a sigh, "If I have given up content in search of joy, I shall perhaps be a loser by the venture." Soon after this, he wished them a good night, and retired.

Happy as Miss Milner found herself in his company, she saw him leave the room with infinite satisfaction, because her heart was impatient to give loose to its hopes on the bosom of Miss Woodley. She bade Mrs. Horton immediately good night; and, in her friend's apartment, gave way to all the language of passion, warmed with the confidence of meeting its return. She described the sentiments she had read in Lord Elmwood's looks; and though Miss Woodley had beheld them too, Miss Milner's fancy heightened the expression of every glance, till her construction became, by degrees, so extremely favourable to her own wishes, that had not her friend been likewise present, and known in what measure to estimate those symptoms,



she must infallibly have thought, by the joy to which they gave birth, that he had openly avowed a passion for her.

Miss Woodley, of course, thought it her duty to allay these ecstasies, and represented to her, she might be deceived in her hopes; or, even supposing his wishes inclined towards her, there were yet great obstacles between them. "Would not Sandford, who directed his every thought and purpose, be consulted upon this important one? And if he was, upon what, but the most romantic affection on the part of Lord Elmwood, had Miss Milner to depend? and his Lordship was not a man to be suspected of submitting to the excess of any passion." Thus did Miss Woodley argue, lest her friend should be misled by her hopes; yet in her own mind she scarcely harboured a doubt that anything would occur to thwart them. The succeeding circumstance proved she was mistaken.

Another gentleman of family and fortune made overtures to Miss Milner, and her guardian, so far from having his thoughts inclined towards her on his own account, pleaded this lover's cause even with more zeal than he had pleaded for Sir Edward and Lord Frederick; thus at once destroying all those plans of happiness which poor Miss Milner had formed.

In consequence, her melancholy disposition of mind was now predominant. She confined herself at home, and, by her own express order, was denied to all her visitors. Whether this arose from pure melancholy, or the still lingering hope of making her conquest, by that sedateness of manners which she knew her guardian admired, she herself perhaps did not perfectly know. Be that as it may, Lord Elmwood could not but observe this change, and one morning thought fit to mention and to applaud it.



Miss Woodley and she were at work together when he came into the room ; and after sitting several minutes, and talking upon indifferent subjects, to which his ward replied with a dejection in her voice and manner, he said—

“ Perhaps I am wrong, Miss Milner, but I have observed that you are lately more thoughtful than usual.”

She blushed, as she always did when the subject was herself. He continued—“ Your health appears perfectly restored, and yet I have observed you take no delight in your former amusements.”

“ Are you sorry for that, my Lord ? ”

“ No, I am extremely glad ; and I was going to congratulate you upon the change. But give me leave to inquire, to what fortunate accident we may attribute this alteration ? ”

“ Your Lordship, then, thinks all my commendable deeds arise from accident, and that I have no virtues of my own.”

“ Pardon me, I think you have many.” This he spoke emphatically, and her blushes increased.

He resumed—“ How can I doubt of a lady’s virtues, when her countenance gives me such evident proofs of them ? Believe me, Miss Milner, that in the midst of your gayest follies, while you thus continue to blush, I shall reverence your internal sensations.”

“ Oh ! my Lord, did you know some of them, I am afraid you would think them unpardonable.”

This was so much to the purpose, that Miss Woodley found herself alarmed ; but without reason. Miss Milner loved too sincerely to reveal it to the object. He answered—

“ And did you know some of mine, you might think them *equally* unpardonable.”



She turned pale, and could no longer guide her needle. In the fond transport of her heart she imagined that his love for her was among the sensations to which he alluded. She was too much embarrassed to reply, and he continued—

“We have all much to pardon in one another; and I know not whether the officious person who forces even his good advice, is not as blamable as the obstinate one, who will not listen to it. And now, having made a preface to excuse you, should you once more refuse mine, I shall venture to give it.”

“My Lord, I have never yet refused to follow your advice; but where my own peace of mind was so nearly concerned, as to have made me culpable, had I complied.”

“Well, Madam, I submit to your past determinations; and shall never again oppose your inclination to remain single.”

The sentence, as it excluded the design of soliciting for himself, gave her the utmost pain; and her eye glanced at him, full of reproach. He did not observe it, but went on:—

“While you continue unmarried, it seems to have been your father’s intention that you should continue under my immediate care; but, as I mean for the future to reside chiefly in the country, answer me candidly, Do you think you could be happy there, for at least three parts of the year?”

After a short hesitation, she replied—“I have no objection.”

“I am glad to hear it,” he returned eagerly; “for it is my sincere desire to have you with me. Your welfare is dear to me as my own; and were we apart continual apprehensions would prey upon my mind.”

The tear started in her eye, at the earnestness that accom-



panied these words. He saw it, and to soften her still more with the sense of his esteem for her, he increased his earnestness, while he said—

“If you will take the resolution to quit London for the length of time I mention, there shall be no means omitted to make the country all you can wish. I shall insist upon Miss Woodley’s company for both our sakes ; and it will not only be *my* study to form such a society as you may approve, but I am certain it will be likewise the study of Lady Elmwood—”

He was going on ; but as if a poniard had thrust her to the heart, she writhed under this unexpected stroke.

He saw her countenance change ; he looked at her steadfastly.

It was not a common change from joy to sorrow, from content to uneasiness, which Miss Milner discovered—she felt and she expressed anguish. Lord Elmwood was alarmed and shocked. She did not weep ; but she called Miss Woodley to come to her, with a voice that indicated a degree of agony.

“My Lord,” cried Miss Woodley, seeing his consternation, and trembling lest he should guess the secret, “My Lord, Miss Milner has again deceived you ; you must not take her from London. It is that, and that alone, which is the cause of her uneasiness.”

He seemed more amazed still, and still more shocked at her duplicity than at her torture.

“Good heaven !” exclaimed he. “How am I to accomplish her wishes ? What am I to do ? How can I judge, if she will not confide in me ; but thus for ever deceive me ?”

She leaned, pale as death, on the shoulder of Miss Woodley ; her eye fixed with apparent insensibility to all that was said, while he continued—



"Heaven is my witness, if I knew, if I could conceive the means to make her happy, I would sacrifice my own happiness to hers."

"My Lord," said Miss Woodley, with a smile, "perhaps I may call upon you hereafter to fulfil your word."

He was totally ignorant of what she meant, nor had he leisure, from the confusion of his thoughts, to reflect upon her meaning ; he nevertheless replied with warmth—

"Do.—You shall find I'll perform it. Do.—I will faithfully perform it.

Though Miss Milner was conscious this declaration could not, in delicacy, be ever adduced against him ; yet the fervent and solemn manner in which he made it cheered her spirits ; and as persons enjoy the reflection of having in their possession some valuable gem, though they are determined never to use it, so she upon this promise was comforted and grew better. She now lifted up her head, and leaned it on her hand, as she sat by the side of a table. Still she did not speak ; but seemed overcome with sorrow. As her situation became, however, less alarming, her guardian's pity and affright began to take the colour of resentment ; and though he did not say so, he was, and looked, highly offended.

At this juncture Mr. Sandford entered. On beholding the present party, it required not his sagacity to see, at the first view, that they were all uneasy ; but, instead of the sympathy this might have excited in some dispositions, Mr. Sandford, after casting a look at each of them, appeared in high spirits.

"You seem unhappy, my Lord," said he, with a smile.

"You do *not*, Mr. Sandford," Lord Elmwood replied.

"No, my Lord, nor would I, were I in your situation. What should make a man of sense out of temper but a worthy object !" And he looked at Miss Milner.



"There are no objects unworthy our care," replied Lord Elmwood.

"But there are objects on whom all care is fruitless, your Lordship will allow."

"I never yet despaired of any one, Mr. Sandford."

"And yet there are persons, of whom it is presumption to entertain any hopes." And he looked again at Miss Milner.

"Does your head ache, Miss Milner?" asked her friend, seeing her hold it with her hand.

"Very much," returned she.

"Mr Sandford," said Miss Woodley, "did you use all those drops Miss Milner gave you for a pain in the head?"

"Yes," answered he, "I did." But the question at that moment somewhat embarrassed him.

"And I hope you found benefit from them," said Miss Milner, with great kindness, as she rose from her seat, and walked slowly out of the room.

Though Miss Woodley followed her, so that Mr. Sandford was left alone with Lord Elmwood, and might have continued his unkind insinuations without one restraint, yet his lips were closed for the present. He looked down on the carpet, twitched himself upon his chair, and began to talk of the weather.



## CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN the first transports of despair were past, Miss Milner suffered herself to be once more in hope. She found there were no other means to support her life ; and to her comfort, her friend was much less severe on the present occasion than she had expected. No engagement between mortals was, in Miss Woodley's opinion, binding like that entered into with heaven : and whatever vows Lord Elmwood had possibly made to another, she justly supposed that no woman's love for him equalled Miss Milner's ; it was prior to all others ; that established her claim, at least, to contend for success ; and in a contention, what rival would not fall before her ?

It was not difficult to guess who this rival was ; or, if they were a little time in suspense, Miss Woodley soon arrived at the certainty, by inquiring of Mr. Sandford, who, unsuspecting why she asked, readily informed her that the intended Lady Elmwood was no other than Miss Fenton ; and that the marriage would be solemnized as soon as the mourning for the late Lord Elmwood was over. This last intelligence made Miss Woodley shudder ; she repeated it, however, to Miss Milner, word for word.

"Happy ! happy woman !" exclaimed Miss Milner, of Miss Fenton ; "she has received the first fond impulse of his heart, and has had the transcendent happiness of teaching him to love !"

"By no means," returned Miss Woodley, finding no other



suggestion likely to comfort her ; “do not suppose that his marriage is the result of love ; it is no more than a duty, a necessary arrangement, and this you may plainly see by the wife on whom he has fixed. Miss Fenton was thought a proper match for his cousin, and that same propriety has transferred her to him.”

It was easy to convince Miss Milner that all her friend said was truth, for she wished it so. “And oh!” she exclaimed, “could I but stimulate passion, against the cold influence of propriety ! Do you think, my dear Miss Woodley,” (and she looked with such begging eyes, it was impossible not to answer as she wished,) “do you think it would be unjust to Miss Fenton, were I to inspire her appointed husband with a passion which she may not have inspired, and which I believe *she* cannot feel?”

Miss Woodley paused a minute, and then answered, “No ;” but there was a hesitation in her manner of delivery ; she *did* say, “No,” but she looked as if she was afraid she ought to have said “Yes.” Miss Milner, however, did not give her time to recall the word, or to alter its meaning by adding others, but ran on eagerly, and declared, “As that was her opinion, she would abide by it, and do all she could to supplant her rival.” In order, nevertheless, to justify this determination, and satisfy the conscience of Miss Woodley, they both concluded that Miss Fenton’s heart was not engaged in the intended marriage, and consequently, that she was indifferent whether it ever took place or not.

Since the death of the late Earl, she had not been in town ; nor had the present Earl been near the place where she resided, since the week in which her lover died ; of course, nothing similar to love could have been declared at so early a period ; and if it had been made known later, it must only have been by letter, or by depu-



tation of Mr. Sandford, who they knew had been once in the country to visit her; but how little he was qualified to enforce a tender passion, was a comfortable reflection.

Revived by these conjectures, of which some were true, and others false, the very next day a gloom overspread their bright prospects, on Mr. Sandford saying, as he entered the breakfast-room—

“Miss Fenton, ladies, desired me to present her compliments.”

“Is she in town?” asked Mrs. Horton.

“She came yesterday morning,” returned Sandford, “and is at her brother’s in Ormond Street; my Lord and I supped there last night, and that made us so late home.”

Lord Elmwood entered soon after, and bowing to his ward, confirmed what had been said, by telling her that “Miss Fenton had charged him with her kindest respects.”

“How does poor Miss Fenton look?” Mrs. Horton asked Lord Elmwood.

To which question Sandford replied—“Beautiful—she looks beautifully.”

“She has got over her uneasiness, I suppose, then?” said Mrs. Horton; not dreaming that she was asking the question before her new lover.

“Uneasy!” replied Sandford, “uneasy at any trial this world can send! That would be highly unworthy of her.”

“But sometimes women do fret at such things,” replied Mrs. Horton, innocently.

Lord Elmwood asked Miss Milner if she meant to ride, this beautiful day?

While she was hesitating—

“There are different kinds of women,” (said Sandford,



directing his discourse to Mrs. Horton); "there is as much difference between some women, as between good and evil spirits."

Lord Elmwood asked Miss Milner again if she took an airing?

She replied, "No."

"And beauty," continued Sandford, "when endowing spirits that are evil, is a mark of their greater, their more extreme wickedness. Lucifer was the most beautiful of all the angels in Paradise"—

"How do you know?" said Miss Milner.

"But the beauty of Lucifer" (continued Sandford, in perfect neglect and contempt of her question), "was an aggravation of his guilt; because it shewed a double share of ingratitude to the Divine Creator of that beauty."

"Now you talk of angels," said Miss Milner, "I wish I had wings; and I should like to fly through the park this morning."

"You would be taken for an angel in good earnest," said Lord Elmwood.

Sandford was angry at this little compliment, and cried—"I should think the serpent's skin would be much more characteristic."

"My Lord," cried she, "does not Mr. Sandford use me ill?" Vexed with other things, she felt herself extremely hurt at this, and made the appeal almost in tears."

"Indeed, I think he does." And he looked at Sandford as if he were displeased.

This was a triumph so agreeable to her, that she immediately pardoned the offence; but the offender did not so easily pardon her.

"Good morning, ladies," said Lord Elmwood, rising to go away.

"My Lord," said Miss Woodley, "you promised Miss



Milner to accompany her one evening to the opera ; this is opera night."

"Will you go, my Lord?" asked Miss Milner, in a voice so soft, that he seemed as if he wished, but could not resist it.

"I am to dine at Mr. Fenton's to-day," he replied ; "and if he and his sister will go, and you will allow them part of your box, I will promise to come."

This was a condition by no means acceptable to her ; but as she felt a desire to see him in company with his intended bride, (for she fancied she would be able to perceive his secret sentiments, could she once see them together) she answered not ungraciously, "Yes, my compliments to Mr. and Miss Fenton, and I hope they will favour me with their company."

"Then, Madam, if they come, you may expect me—else not." He bowed, and left the room.

All the day was passed in anxious expectation by Miss Milner, what would be the event of the evening ; for upon her penetration that evening all her future prospects she thought depended. If she saw by his looks, his words, or assiduities, that he loved Miss Fenton, she flattered herself she would never think of him again with hope ; but if she observed him treat her with inattention or indifference, she would cherish, from that moment the fondest expectation. Against that short evening her toilet was consulted the whole day ; the alternate hope and fear which fluttered in her heart, gave a more than usual brilliancy to her eyes, and more than usual bloom to her complexion. But vain her beauty ; vain all her care to decorate that beauty ; vain her many looks to her box-door in hopes to see it open—Lord Elmwood never came.

The music was discord—everything she saw was distasteful—in a word, she was miserable.



She longed impatiently for the curtain to drop because she was uneasy where she was; yet she asked herself, "Shall I be less unhappy at home? Yes; at home I shall see Lord Elmwood, and that will be happiness. But he will behold me with neglect, and that will be misery! Ungrateful man! I will no longer think of him." Yet, could she have thought of him without joining Miss Fenton in the same idea, her anguish had been supportable; but while she painted them as lovers, the tortures of the rack are not in many degrees more painful than those which she endured.

There are but few persons who have ever felt the real passion of jealousy, because few have felt the real passion of love; but with those who have experienced them both, jealousy has not only affected the mind, but every fibre of their frame; and Miss Milner's every limb felt agonizing torment when Miss Fenton, courted and beloved by Lord Elmwood, was present to her imagination.

The moment the opera was finished she hastened downstairs, as if to fly from the sufferings she experienced. She did not go into the coffee-room, though repeatedly urged by Miss Woodley, but waited at the door till her carriage drew up.

Piqued—heart-broken—full of resentment against the object of her uneasiness, and inattentive to all that passed, as she stood, a hand gently touched her own; and the most humble and insinuating voice said, "Will you permit me to lead you to your carriage?" She was awakened from her reverie, and found Lord Frederick Lawnley by her side. Her heart, just then melting with tenderness to another, was perhaps more accessible than heretofore; or, bursting with resentment, thought this the moment to retaliate. Whatever passion reigned that instant, it was favourable to the desires of Lord Frederick, and she looked as if she was glad



to see him. He beheld this with the rapture and the humility of a lover; and though she did not feel the least particle of love in return, she felt gratitude in proportion to the insensibility with which she had been treated by her guardian; and Lord Frederick's supposition was not very unwarrantable if he mistook this gratitude for a latent spark of affection. The mistake, however, did not force him from his respect. He handed her to her carriage, bowed low, and disappeared. Miss Woodley wished to divert her thoughts from the object which could only make her wretched, and, as they rode home, by many encomiums upon Lord Frederick, endeavoured to incite her to a regard for him. Miss Milner was displeased at the attempt, and exclaimed—

“What! love a rake—a man of professed gallantry? Impossible. To me a common rake is as odious as a common prostitute is to a man of the nicest feelings. Where can be the joy, the pride of inspiring a passion which fifty others can equally inspire?”

“Strange,” cried Miss Woodley, “that you, who possess so many follies incident to your sex, should, in the disposal of your heart, have sentiments so contrary to women in general.”

“My dear Miss Woodley,” returned she, “put in competition the languid addresses of a libertine with the animated affection of a sober man, and judge which has the dominion. Oh! in my calendar of love a solemn lord chief justice or a devout archbishop ranks before a licentious king.”

Miss Woodley smiled at an opinion which she knew half her sex would ridicule; but by the air of sincerity with which it was delivered she was convinced her recent behaviour to Lord Frederick was but the mere effect of chance.

Lord Elmwood's carriage drove to his door just at the



time hers did. Mr. Sandford was with him, and they were both come from passing the evening at Mr. Fenton's.

"So, my lord," said Miss Woodley, as soon as they met in the drawing-room, "you did not come to us?"

"No," answered he; "I was sorry; but I hope you did not expect me."

"Not expect you, my Lord?" cried Miss Milner. "Did not you say that you would come?"

"If I had, I certainly should have come," returned he; but I only said so conditionally."

"That I am witness to," cried Sandford; "for I was present at the time, and he said it should depend upon Miss Fenton."

"And she, with her gloomy disposition," said Miss Milner, "chose to sit at home."

"Gloomy disposition!" repeated Sandford. "She has a great share of sprightliness; and I think I never saw her in better spirits than she was this evening, my Lord."

Lord Elmwood did not speak.

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford," cried Miss Milner, "I meant no reflection upon Miss Fenton's disposition. I only meant to censure her taste for staying at home."

"I think," replied Sandford, "a much heavier censure should be passed upon those who prefer rambling abroad."

"But I hope, ladies, my not coming," said Lord Elmwood, "was no inconvenience to you; for you had still, I see, a gentleman with you."

"Oh, yes; two gentlemen," answered the son of Lady Evans, a youth from school, whom Miss Milner had taken along with her.

"What two?" asked Lord Elmwood.

Neither Miss Milner nor Miss Woodley answered.

"You know, Madam," said young Evans, "that handsome gentleman who handed you into your carriage, and whom you called my Lord."



"Oh, he means Lord Frederick Lawnley," said Miss Milner, carelessly; but a blush of shame spread over her face.

"And did he hand you into your coach?" asked Lord Elmwood, earnestly.

"By mere accident, my Lord," Miss Woodley replied; "for the crowd was so great——"

"I think, my Lord," said Sandford, "it was very lucky that you were *not* there."

"Had Lord Elmwood been with us we should not have had occasion for the assistance of any other," said Miss Milner.

"Lord Elmwood has been with you, Madam," returned Sandford, "very frequently, and yet——"

"Mr. Sandford," said Lord Elmwood, interrupting him, "it is near bed-time; your conversation keeps the ladies from retiring."

"Your Lordship's does not," said Miss Milner; "for you say nothing."

"Because, Madam, I am afraid to offend."

"But do not you also hope to please? And without risking the one it is impossible to arrive at the other."

"I think, at present, the risk would be too hazardous, and so I wish you a good night." And he went out of the room somewhat abruptly.

"Lord Elmwood," said Miss Milner, "is very grave. He does not look like a man who has been passing the evening with the woman he loves."

"Perhaps he is melancholy at parting from her," said Miss Woodley.

"More likely offended," said Sandford, "at the manner in which that lady has spoken of her."

"Who, I? I protest I said nothing——"

"Nothing! Did not you say that she was gloomy?"



"Nothing but what I thought, I was going to add, Mr. Sandford."

"When you think unjustly, you should not express your thoughts."

"Then perhaps I should never speak."

"And it were better you did not, if what you say is to give pain. Do you know, Madam, that my Lord is going to be married to Miss Fenton?"

"Yes," answered Miss Milner.

"Do you know that he loves her?"

"No," answered Miss Milner.

"How! Do you suppose he does not?"

"I suppose that he does, yet I don't know it."

"Then, if you suppose that he does, how can you have the imprudence to find fault with her in his presence?"

"I did not. To call her gloomy was, I knew, to commend her both to him and to you, who admire such tempers."

"Whatever her temper is, *every one* admires it; and so far from its being what you have described, she has great vivacity—vivacity which comes from the heart."

"No; if it *came* from thence I should admire it too; but, if she has any, it *rests* there, and no one is the better for it."

"Pshaw!" said Miss Woodley, "it is time for us to retire; you and Mr. Sandford must finish your dispute in the morning."

"Dispute, Madam!" said Sandford; "I never disputed with any one beneath a doctor of divinity in my life. I was only cautioning your friend not to make light of those virtues which it would do her honour to possess. Miss Fenton is a most amiable young woman, and worthy of just such a husband as my Lord Elmwood will make her."

"I am sure," said Miss Woodley, "Miss Milner thinks so."



She has a high opinion of Miss Fenton. She was at present only jesting."

"But, Madam, a jest is a very pernicious thing when delivered with a malignant sneer. I have known a jest destroy a lady's reputation; I have known a jest give one person a distaste for another; I have known a jest break off a marriage."

"But I suppose there is no apprehension of that in the present case?" said Miss Woodley, wishing he might answer in the affirmative.

"Not that I can foresee. No, Heaven forbid," he replied; "for I look upon them to be formed for each other; their dispositions, their pursuits, their inclinations the same. Their passions for each other just the same; pure, white as snow."

"And, I dare say, not warmer," replied Miss Milner.

He looked provoked beyond measure.

"My dear," cried Miss Woodley, "how can you talk thus? I believe in my heart you are only envious because my Lord Elmwood has not offered himself to you."

"To her!" said Sandford, affecting an air of the utmost surprise; "to her! Do you think he received a dispensation from his vows, to become the husband of a coquette—a ——" He was going on.

"Nay, Mr. Sandford," cried Miss Milner, "I believe, after all, my worst crime, in your eyes, is that of being a heretic."

"By no means—it is the only circumstance that can apologize for your faults; and if you had not that excuse, there would be none for you."

"Then, at present, there *is* an excuse—I thank you, Mr. Sandford—this is the kindest thing you ever said to me. But I am vexed to see that you are sorry for having said it."



"Angry at your being a heretic!" he resumed. "Indeed I should be much more concerned to see you a disgrace to our religion."

Miss Milner had not been in a good humour the whole evening—she had been provoked several times to the full extent of her patience; but this harsh sentence hurried her beyond all bounds, and she arose from her seat in the most violent agitation, exclaiming, "What have I done to be thus treated?"

Though Mr. Sandford was not a man easily intimidated, he was upon this occasion evidently alarmed; and stared about him with so violent an expression of surprise, that it partook in some degree of fear.

Miss Woodley clasped her friend in her arms, and cried with the tenderest affection and pity, "My dear Miss Milner, be composed."

Miss Milner sat down, and *was* so for a minute; but her dead silence was almost as alarming to Sandford as her rage had been; and he did not perfectly recover himself till he saw tears pouring down her face. He then heaved a sigh of content that all had thus ended; but in his heart resolved never to forget the ridiculous affright into which he had been thrown. He stole out of the room without uttering a syllable; but as he never retired to rest before he had repeated a long form of evening prayer,—when this evening he came to that part which supplicates "Grace for the wicked," he took care to mention Miss Milner's name with the most fervent devotion.



## CHAPTER XXII.

OF the many restless nights that Miss Milner passed, this was not one. It is true she had a weight of care upon her heart, even heavier than usual, but the burden had overcome her strength. Wearied out with hopes, with fears, and, at the end, with disappointment and rage, she sank at once into a deep slumber. But the more forgetfulness had then prevailed, the more powerful was the force of remembrance when she awoke. At first, so sound her sleep had been, that she had a difficulty in calling to mind why she was unhappy; but that she *was* unhappy she well recollected; when the cause came to her memory, she would have slept again—but it was impossible.

Though her rest had been unbroken, it had not been refreshing—she was far from well, and sent word of her indisposition, as an apology for not being present at breakfast. Lord Elmwood looked concerned when the message was delivered. Mr. Sandford shook his head.

“Miss Milner’s health is not good!” said Mrs. Horton a few minutes after.

Lord Elmwood laid down the newspaper to attend to what she said.

“To me, there is something very extraordinary about her!” continued Mrs. Horton, finding she had caught his Lordship’s attention.

“So there is to me!” added Sandford, with a sarcastic sneer.



"And so there is to me!" said Miss Woodley, with a serious face and a heartfelt sigh.

Lord Elmwood gazed by turns at each, as each delivered their sentiments—and when they were all silent he looked bewildered, not knowing what judgment to form from any one of these sentences.

Soon after breakfast, Mr. Sandford withdrew to his own apartment; Mrs. Horton, in a little time, went to hers; Lord Elmwood and Miss Woodley were left alone. He immediately rose from his seat, and said—

"I think, Miss Woodley, Miss Milner was extremely to blame, though I did not choose to tell her so before Mr. Sandford, in giving Lord Frederick an opportunity of speaking to her, unless she means that he shall renew his addresses."

"That, I am certain," replied Miss Woodley, "she does *not* mean—and I assure you, my Lord, seriously, it was by mere accident she saw him yesterday evening, or permitted his attendance upon her to her carriage."

"I am glad to hear it," he returned quickly; "for although I am not of a suspicious nature, yet in regard to her affection for him, I cannot but still have my doubts."

"You need have none, my Lord," replied Miss Woodley, with a smile of confidence.

"And yet you must own her behaviour has warranted them. Has it not been, in this particular, incoherent and unaccountable?"

"The behaviour of a person in love, no doubt," answered Miss Woodley.

"Don't I say so?" replied he warmly; "and is not that a just reason for my suspicions?"

"But is there only one man in the world on whom those suspicions can fix?" said Miss Woodley, with the colour mounting into her face.



"Not that I know of—not one more that I know of," he replied, with astonishment at what she had insinuated, and yet with a perfect assurance that she was in the wrong.

"Perhaps I am mistaken," answered she.

"Nay, that is impossible too," returned he with anxiety—"You share her confidence—you are perpetually with her; and for that reason, if she did not confide in you (which I know, and rejoice that she does) you would yet be acquainted with all her inclinations."

"I believe I am *perfectly* acquainted with them," replied Miss Woodley, with a significance in her voice and manner which convinced him there was some secret to learn.

After a hesitation—

"It is far from me," replied he, "to wish to be intrusted with the private sentiments of those who desire to withhold them from me; much less would I take any unfair means to be informed. To ask any more questions of you, I believe, would be unfair. Yet I cannot but lament that I am not as well instructed as you are. I wish to prove my friendship to Miss Milner, but she will not suffer me—and every step that I take for her happiness, I take in the most perplexing uncertainty."

Miss Woodley sighed—but she did not speak.

He seemed to wait for her reply; but as she made none, he proceeded—

"If ever breach of confidence could be tolerated, I certainly know no occasion that would so justly authorise it as the present. I am not only proper from character, but from circumstances, to be relied upon: my interest is so nearly connected with the interest, and my happiness with the happiness of my ward, that those principles, as well as my honour, would protect her against every peril arising from my being trusted."

"Oh! my Lord," cried Miss Woodley, with a most forcible



accent, "*You* are the last person on earth she would pardon me for intrusting with her secret."

"Why so?" said he, warmly. "But that is the way—the person who is our friend we distrust—where a common interest is concerned, we are ashamed of drawing on a common danger—afraid of advice, though that advice is to preserve us. Miss Woodley," said he, changing his voice with excess of earnestness, "do you not believe, that I would do anything to make Miss Milner happy?"

"Anything in honour, my Lord."

"She can desire nothing farther," he replied in agitation. "Are her desires so unwarrantable, that I cannot grant them?"

Miss Woodley again did not speak—and he continued—

"Great as my friendship is, there are certainly bounds to it—bounds that shall save her in spite of herself;"—and he raised his voice.

"In the disposal of themselves," resumed he, with a less vehement tone, "that great, that terrific disposal in marriage, (at which I have always looked with fear and dismay) there is no accounting for the rashness of a woman's choice, or sometimes for the depravity of her taste. But in such a case, Miss Milner's election of a husband shall not direct mine. If she does not know how to estimate her own value, I do. Independent of her fortune, she has beauty to captivate the heart of any man; and with all her follies, she has a frankness in her manner, an unaffected wisdom in her thoughts, a vivacity in her conversation, and withal, a softness in her demeanour, that might alone engage the affections of a man of the nicest sentiments, and the strongest understanding. I will not see all these qualities and accomplishments debased. It is my office to protect her from the consequences of a degrading choice, and I will execute the obligation."



"My Lord, Miss Milner's taste is not a depraved one; it is but too refined."

"What can you mean by that, Miss Woodley? You talk mysteriously. Is she not afraid that I will oppose her inclinations?"

"She is *sure* that you will, my Lord."

"Then the person must be unworthy of her."

Miss Woodley rose from her seat—she clasped her hands—every look and every gesture proved her alternate resolution and irresolution to proceed farther. Lord Elmwood's attention was arrested before; but now it was fixed to a degree of curiosity and surprise, which her extraordinary manner could only have excited.

"My Lord," said she, with a tremulous voice,—“promise me, declare to me, nay, swear to me, that it shall ever remain a secret in your own breast, and I will reveal to you on whom she has placed her affections.”

This preparation made Lord Elmwood tremble; and he ran over instantly in his mind all the persons he could recollect, in order to arrive at the knowledge by thought, quicker than by words. It was in vain he tried; and he once more turned his enquiring eyes upon Miss Woodley. He saw her silent and covered with confusion. Again he searched his own thoughts; nor ineffectually as before. At the first glance the object was presented, and he beheld—*himself*.

The rapid emotion of varying passions which immediately darted over his features informed Miss Woodley that her secret was discovered. She hid her face, while the tears that fell down to her bosom confirmed the truth of his mind's suggestion more forcibly than oaths could have done. A short interval of silence followed, during which she suffered tortures for the manner in which he would next address her. A few seconds gave her this reply:—



"For God's sake take care what you are doing. You are destroying my prospects of futurity—you are making this world too dear to me."

Her drooping head was then lifted up, and she caught the eye of Dorriforth. She saw it beam expectation, amazement, joy, ardour, and love. Nay, there was a fire, a vehemence in the quick, fascinating rays it sent forth she never before had seen. It filled her with alarm. She wished him to love Miss Milner, but to love her with moderation. Miss Woodley was too little versed in the subject to know this would have been not to love at all; at least, not to the extent of breaking through engagements and all the various obstacles that still militated against their union.

Lord Elmwood was sensible of the embarrassment his presence gave Miss Woodley, and understood the reproaches which she seemed to vent upon herself in silence. To relieve her from both, he laid his hand with force upon his heart, and said, "Do you believe me?"

"I do, my Lord," she answered, trembling.

"I will make no unjust use of what I know," he replied with firmness.

"I believe you, my Lord."

"But for what my passions now dictate," continued he, "I will not hereafter answer. They are confused—they are triumphant at present. I have never yet, however, been vanquished by them; and even upon this occasion my reason shall combat them to the last—and my reason shall fail me before I act dishonourably."

He was going to leave the room. She followed him, and cried, "But, my Lord, how shall I see again the unhappy object of my treachery?"

"See her," replied he, "as one to whom you meant no injury, and to whom you have done none."

"But she would account it an injury."



"We are not judges of what belongs to ourselves," he replied. "I am transported at the tidings you have revealed, and yet, perhaps, it had been better if I had never heard them."

Miss Woodley was going to say something farther, but, as if incapable of attending to her, he hurried out of the room.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

MISS WOODLEY stood for some time to consider which way she was to go. The first person she met would inquire why she had been weeping. And if Miss Milner was to ask the question, in what words could she tell, or in what manner deny the truth? To avoid her was her first caution, and she took the only method: she had a hackney coach ordered, rode several miles out of town, and returned to dinner with so little remains of her swollen eyes, that complaining of the headache was a sufficient excuse for them.

Miss Milner was enough recovered to be present at dinner, though she hardly tasted a morsel. Lord Elmwood did not dine at home, at which Miss Woodley rejoiced, but at which Mr. Sandford appeared highly disappointed. He asked the servants several times what my Lord said when he went out. They replied, "Nothing more than that he should not be at home to dinner."

"I can't imagine where he dines," said Sandford.

"Bless me, Mr. Sandford, can't you guess?" cried Mrs. Horton, who by this time was made acquainted with his intended marriage. "He dines with Miss Fenton, to be sure."

"No," replied Sandford, "he is not there. I came from thence just now, and they had not seen him all day."

Poor Miss Milner on this began to eat a little; for where we hope for nothing we receive small indulgences with joy.



Notwithstanding the anxiety and trouble under which Miss Woodley had laboured all the morning, her heart for many weeks had not felt so light as it did this day at dinner. The confidence that she reposed in the promises of Lord Elmwood, the firm reliance she had upon his delicacy and his justice, the unabated kindness with which her friend received her, while she knew that no one suspicious thought had taken harbour in her bosom, and the conscious integrity of her own intentions, though she might have been misled by her judgment, all comforted her with the hope she had done nothing she ought to wish recalled. But though she felt thus tranquil in respect to what she had divulged, yet she was a good deal disquieted with the dread of next seeing Lord Elmwood.

Miss Milner, not having spirits to go abroad, passed the evening at home. She read part of a new opera, played upon her harp, mused, sighed, occasionally talked with Miss Woodley, and so passed the tedious hours till near ten, when Mrs. Horton asked Mr. Sandford to play a game of piquet, and, on his excusing himself, Miss Milner offered in his stead, and was gladly accepted. They had just begun to play when Lord Elmwood came into the room. Miss Milner's countenance immediately brightened, and though she was in a negligent morning dress, and looked paler than usual, she did not look less beautiful. Miss Woodley was leaning on the back of her chair to observe the game, and Mr. Sandford sat reading one of the *Fathers* at the other side of the fire-place. Lord Elmwood, as he advanced to the table, bowed, not having seen the ladies since the morning, nor Miss Milner that day. They returned the salute, and he was going up to Miss Milner, as if to inquire of her health, when Mr. Sandford, laying down his book, said—

“My Lord, where have you been all day?”



"I have been very busy," replied he, and walking from the card-table, went up to him.

Miss Milner played one card for another.

"You have been at Mr. Fenton's this evening, I suppose?" said Sandford.

"No; not at all to day."

"How came that about, my Lord?"

Miss Milner played the ace of diamonds instead of the king of hearts.

"I shall call to-morrow," answered Lord Elmwood; and then, walking with a very ceremonious air up to Miss Milner, said he hoped she was perfectly recovered.

Mrs. Horton begged her to mind what she was about.

She replied, "I am much better, Sir."

He then returned to Sandford again; but never, during all this time, did his eye once encounter Miss Woodley's, and she, with equal care, avoided his.

Some cold dishes were now brought up for supper. Miss Milner lost her deal, and the game ended.

As they were arranging themselves at the supper-table, "Do, Miss Milner," said Mrs. Horton, "have something warm for your supper—a chicken boiled, or something of that kind; you have eaten nothing to-day."

With feelings of humanity, and apparently no other sensation—but never did he feel his philanthropy so forcible—Lord Elmwood said, "Let me beg of you, Miss Milner, to have something provided for you."

The earnestness and emphasis with which these few words were pronounced were more flattering than the finest-turned compliment would have been. Her gratitude was expressed in blushes and by assuring him she was now so well as to sup on the provisions before her. She spoke, however, and had not made her trial; for the moment she carried a morsel to her lips she laid it on the plate again, and



turned paler from the vain endeavour to force her appetite. Lord Elmwood had always been attentive to her; but now he watched her as he would a child, and when he saw by her struggles that she could not eat, he took her plate from her, gave her something else, and all with a care and watchfulness in his looks as if he had been a tender-hearted boy and she his darling bird, the loss of which would embitter all the joy of his holidays.

This attention had something in it so tender, so officious, and yet so sincere, that it brought the tears into Miss Woodley's eyes, attracted the notice of Mr. Sandford, and the observation of Mrs. Horton, while the heart of Miss Milner overflowed with a gratitude that gave place to no sentiment except her love.

To relieve the anxiety which her guardian expressed, she endeavoured to appear cheerful, and that anxiety at length really made her so. He now pressed her to take one glass of wine with such solicitude that he seemed to say a thousand things besides. Sandford still made his observations, and, being unused to conceal his thoughts before the present company, he said bluntly—

“Miss Fenton was indisposed the other night, my Lord, and you did not seem half thus anxious about her.”

Had Sandford laid all Lord Elmwood's estate at Miss Milner's feet, or presented her with that eternal bloom which adorns the face of a goddess, he would have done less to endear himself to her than by this one sentence. She looked at him with a most benign countenance, and felt affliction that she had ever offended him.

“Miss Fenton,” Lord Elmwood replied, “has a brother with her. Her health and happiness are in *his* care—Miss Milner's are in mine.”

“Mr. Sandford,” said Miss Milner, “I am afraid that I



behaved uncivilly to you last night. Will you accept of an atonement?"

"No, Madam," returned he; "I accept no expiation without amendment."

"Well, then," said she, smiling, "suppose I promise never to offend you again, what then?"

"Why, then you'll break your promise."

"Do not promise him," said Lord Elmwood, "for he means to provoke you to it."

In the like conversation the evening passed, and Miss Milner retired to rest in far better spirits than her morning's prospect had given her the least pretence to hope. Miss Woodley, too, had cause to be well pleased; but her pleasure was in great measure eclipsed by the reflection that there was such a person as Miss Fenton. She wished she had been equally acquainted with hers as with Miss Milner's heart, and she would then have acted without injustice to either; but Miss Fenton had of late shunned their society, and even in their company was of a temper too reserved ever to discover her mind. Miss Woodley was obliged, therefore, to act to the best of her own judgment only, and leave all events to Providence.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

WITHIN a few weeks, in the house of Lord Elmwood, every thing, and every person, wore a new face. He was the professed lover of Miss Milner—she the happiest of human beings; Miss Woodley partaking in the joy. Mr. Sandford lamented, with the deepest concern, that Miss Fenton had been supplanted; and what added poignantly to his concern was, that she had been supplanted by Miss Milner.

Though a churchman, he bore his disappointment with the impatience of one of the laity. He could hardly speak to Lord Elmwood; he would not look at Miss Milner, and was displeased with every one. It was his intention, when he first became acquainted with Lord Elmwood's resolution, to quit his house; and as the Earl had, with the utmost degree of inflexibility, resisted all his good counsel upon this subject, he resolved, in quitting him, never to be his adviser again.

But in preparing to leave his friend, his pupil, his patron, who, upon most occasions, had implicitly obeyed his will, the spiritual got the better of the temporal man, and he determined to stay, lest in totally abandoning him to the pursuit of his own passions, he should make his punishment even greater than his offence.

"My Lord," said he, "on the stormy sea, upon which you are embarked, though you will not shun the rocks that your faithful pilot would point out, he will, nevertheless, sail in



your company, and lament over your watery grave. The more you slight my advice the more you require it ; so that, until you command me to leave your house (as I suppose you will soon do, to oblige your lady), I will continue along with you."

Lord Elmwood liked him sincerely, and was glad that he took this resolution. Yet as soon as his reason and affections had once told him that he ought to break with Miss Fenton, and marry his ward, he became so decidedly of this opinion, that Sandford's never had the most trivial weight ; nor would he even flatter the supposed authority he possessed over him, by urging him to remain in his house a single day contrary to his inclinations. Sandford observed, with grief, this firmness ; but finding it vain to contend, submitted, not however with a good grace.

Amidst all the persons affected by this change in Lord Elmwood's marriage-designs, Miss Fenton was, perhaps, affected the least : she would have been content to have married—she was content to live single.

Mr. Sandford had been the first who made overtures to her on the part of Lord Elmwood, and was the first sent to ask her to dispense with the obligation. She received both of these proposals with the same insipid smile of approbation, and the same cold indifference at the heart.

It was a perfect knowledge of this disposition in his intended wife, which had given to Lord Elmwood's thoughts on matrimony, the idea of dreary winter ; but the sensibility of Miss Milner had now reversed that prospect into perpetual spring ; or the dearer variety of spring, summer, and autumn.

It was a knowledge also of this torpor in Miss Fenton's nature, from which he formed the purpose of breaking with her ; for Lord Elmwood still retained enough of the sanctity



of his former state to have yielded up his own happiness, and even that of his beloved ward, rather than have plunged one heart into affliction by his perfidy. This, before he offered his hand to Miss Milner, he was perfectly convinced would not be the case. Even Miss Fenton herself assured him, that her thoughts were more upon the joys of heaven than upon those of earth ; and as this circumstance would, she believed, induce her to retire into a convent, she considered it a happy, rather than an unhappy, event. Her brother, on whom her fortune devolved if she took this holy resolution, was exactly of her opinion.

Lost in the maze of happiness that surrounded her, Miss Milner oftentimes asked her heart, and her heart whispered like a flatterer, "Yes." "Are not my charms even more invincible than I ever believed them to be ? Dorriforth, the grave, the pious, the anchorite Dorriforth, by their force, is animated to all the ardour of the most impassioned lover, while the proud priest, the austere guardian, is humbled, if I but frown, into the veriest slave of love."

She then asked. "Why did I not keep him longer in suspense ? He could not have loved me more, I believe ; but my power over him might have been greater still. I am the happiest of women in the affection he has proved to me, but I wonder whether it would exist under ill-treatment ? If it would not, he still does not love me as I wish to be loved. If it would, my triumph, my felicity, would be enhanced."

These thoughts were mere phantoms of the brain, and never, by system, put into action ; but, repeatedly indulged, they were practised by casual occurrences, and the dear-bought experiment of being loved in spite of her faults (a glory proud women ever aspire to) was, at present, the ambition of Miss Milner.

Unthinking woman ! she did not reflect, that to the



searching eye of Lord Elmwood, she had faults, with her utmost care to conceal or overcome them, sufficient to try all his love, and all his patience. But what female is not fond of experiments? To which, how few there are, that do not fall a sacrifice !

Perfectly secure in the affections of the man she loved, her declining health no longer threatened her. Her declining spirits returned as before, and the suspicions of her guardian being now changed to the liberal confidence of a doting lover, she again professed all her former follies, all her fashionable levities, and indulged them with less restraint than ever.

For awhile, blinded by his passion, Lord Elmwood encouraged and admired every new proof of her restored happiness ; nor, till sufferance had tempted her beyond her usual bounds, did he remonstrate.

But she who, as his ward, had been ever gentle, and (when he strenuously opposed) always obedient, became, as a mistress, sometimes haughty, and, to opposition, always insolent.

He was surprised, but the novelty pleased him ; and Miss Milner, whom he tenderly loved, could put on no change, or appear in no new character, that did not, for the time she adopted it, seem to become her.

Among the many causes of complaint which she gave him, want of economy in the disposal of her income was one. Bills and drafts came upon him without number, while the account, on her part, of money expended, amounted chiefly to articles of dress that she sometimes never wore ; toys that were out of fashion before they were paid for, and charities directed by the force of whim.

Another complaint was, as usual, extreme late hours, and often company that he did not approve.



She was charmed to see his love struggling with his censure ; his politeness with his anxiety ; and by the light, frivolous, or resentful manner in which she treated his admonitions, she triumphed in shewing to Miss Woodley, and more especially to Mr. Sandford, how much she dared upon the strength of his affections.

Everything being in preparation for their marriage, which was to take place at Elmwood House during the summer months, she resolved for the short time she had to remain in London to let no occasion pass of tasting all those pleasures that were not likely ever to return ; but which, though eager as she was in their pursuit, she never placed in competition with those she hoped would succeed—those more sedate and superior joys of domestic and conjugal happiness. Often, merely to hasten on the tedious hours that intervened, she varied and diverted them, with the many recreations her intended husband could not approve.

It so happened, and it was unfortunate it did, that a lawsuit concerning some possessions in the West Indies, and other intricate affairs that came with his title and estate, frequently kept Lord Elmwood from his house part of the day, sometimes the whole evening ; and when at home, would often closet him for hours with his lawyers.

But while he was thus off his guard, Sandford never was so, and had Miss Milner been the dearest thing on earth to him, he could not have watched her more vigilantly ; or had she been the frailest thing on earth, he could not have been more hard upon her, in all the accounts of her conduct he gave to her guardian.

Lord Elmwood knew, on the other hand, that Sandford's failing was to think ill of Miss Milner. He pitied him for it, and he pitied her for it ; and in all the aggravation which his representations gave to her real follies, affection for them both, in the heart of Dorriforth, stood



between accusation and every other unfavourable impression.

But facts are glaring ; and he, at length, beheld those faults in their true colours, though previously pointed out by the prejudice of Mr. Sandford.

As soon as Sandford perceived his friend's confutation and uneasiness—"There, my Lord !" cried he, exultingly, "did I not always say the marriage was an improper one? But you would not be ruled—you would not see."

"Can you blame *me* for not seeing," replied his Lordship, "when *you* were blind? Had you been dispassionate, had you seen Miss Milner's virtues as well as her faults, I should have believed and been guided by you ; but you saw her failings only, and therein have been equally deceived with me, who have only beheld her perfections."

"My observations, however, my Lord, would have been of most use to you ; for I have seen what to avoid."

"But mine have been the most gratifying," replied he, "for I have seen—what I must always love."

Sandford sighed, and lifted up his hands.

"Mr. Sandford," resumed Lord Elmwood, with a voice and manner such as were usual to him when not all the power of Sandford, or of any other, could change his fixed determination ; "Mr. Sandford, my eyes are now open to every failing, as well as to every accomplishment ; to every vice, as well as to every virtue, of Miss Milner ; nor will I suffer myself to be again prepossessed in her favour, by your prejudice against her ; for I believe it was compassion at your unkind treatment that first gained her my heart."

"I, my Lord?" cried Sandford ; "do not load me with the burthen—with the mighty burthen of your love for her."

"Do not interrupt me. Whatever your meaning has



been, the effect of it is what I have described. Now I will no longer," continued he, "have an enemy, such as you have been, to heighten her charms, which are too transcendent in their native state. I will hear no more complaints against her, but I will watch her closely myself—and if I find her mind and heart (such as my suspicions have of late whispered) too frivolous for that substantial happiness I look for with an object so beloved, depend upon my word—the marriage shall yet be broken off."

"I depend upon your word, it *will* then," replied Sandford, eagerly.

"You are unjust, Sir, in saying so before the trial," replied Lord Elmwood, "and your injustice shall make me more cautious, lest I follow your example."

"But, my Lord——"

"My mind is made up, Mr. Sandford," returned he, interrupting him—"I am no longer engaged to Miss Milner than she shall deserve I should be—but, in my strict observations upon her conduct, I will take care not to wrong her as you have done."

"My Lord, call my observations wrong, when you have reflected upon them as a man, and not as a lover—divest yourself of your passion, and meet me upon equal ground."

"I will meet no one—I will consult no one—my own judgment shall be the judge, and in a few months shall marry me to her, or—*banish me from her for ever.*"

There was something in these last words, in the tone and firmness with which they were delivered, that the heart of Sandford rested upon with content—they bore the symptoms of a menace that would be executed; and he parted from his patron with congratulations upon his wisdom, and with giving him the warmest assurances of his firm reliance on his *word*.



Lord Elmwood having come to this resolution, was more composed than he had been for several days before; while the horror of domestic wrangles—a family without subordination—a house without economy—in a word, a wife without discretion, had been perpetually present to his mind.

Mr. Sandford, although he was a man of understanding, of learning, and a complete casuist, yet all the faults he committed were entirely—for the want of knowing better. He constantly reproved faults in others, and he was most assuredly too good a man not to have corrected and amended his own, had they been known to him—but they were not. He had been for so long a time the spiritual superior of all with whom he lived, had been so busied with instructing others, that he had not once recollected that he himself wanted instruction; and in such awe did his habitual severity keep all about him, that although he had numerous friends, not one told him of his failings—except just now Lord Elmwood, but whom, in this instance, as a man in love, he would not credit. Was there not then some reason for him to suppose he *had* no faults?—his enemies, indeed, hinted that he had, but enemies he never hearkened to; and thus, with all his good sense, wanted the sense to follow the rule, *Believe what your enemies say of you, rather than what is said by your friends*. For could an enemy, to whom he would have listened, have whispered to Sandford as he left Lord Elmwood, “cruel, barbarous man! you go away with your heart satisfied, nay, even elated, in the prospect that Miss Milner’s hopes, on which she alone exists, those hopes which keep her from the deepest affliction, and cherish her with joy and gladness, will all be disappointed. You flatter yourself it is for the sake of your friend, Lord Elmwood, that you rejoice, and because he has escaped a peril. You wish him well; but



there is another cause for your exultation which you will not seek to know—it is, that in his safety shall dwell the punishment of his ward. For shame! for shame! forgive her faults, as this of yours requires to be forgiven.”

Had any one said this to Sandford, whom he would have credited, or had his own heart suggested it, he was a man of that rectitude and conscientiousness, that he would have returned immediately to Lord Elmwood, and have strengthened all his favourable opinions of his intended wife—but having no such monitor, he walked on, highly contented, and meeting Miss Woodley, said, with an air of triumph—

“Where is your friend?—where’s Lady Elmwood?”

Miss Woodley smiled and answered—she was gone with such and such ladies to an auction. “But why give her that title already, Mr. Sandford?”

“Because,” answered he, “I think she will never have it.”

“Bless me, Mr. Sandford,” said Miss Woodley, “you shock me!”

“I thought I should,” replied he, “and therefore I told it you.”

“For heaven’s sake what has happened?”

“Nothing new—her indiscretions only.”

“I know she is imprudent,” said Miss Woodley—“I can see that her conduct is often exceptionable—but then Lord Elmwood surely loves her, and love will overlook a great deal.”

“He *does* love her—but he has understanding and resolution. He loved his sister, too, tenderly loved her, and yet when he had taken the resolution, and passed his word that he would never see her again,—even upon her death-bed he would not retract it,—no entreaties could prevail upon him. And now, though he maintains, and I daresay



loves, her child, yet you remember, when you brought him home, that he would not suffer him in his sight."

"Poor Miss Milner!" said Miss Woodley, in the most pitying accents.

"Nay," said Sandford, "Lord Elmwood has not *yet* passed his word that he will never see her more—he has only threatened to do it; but I know enough of him, to know that his threats are generally the same as if they were performed."

"You are very good," said Miss Woodley, "to acquaint me of this in time—I may now warn Miss Milner of it, and she may observe more circumspection."

"By no means," cried Sandford, hastily—"What would you warn her for?—it would do her no good—besides," added he, "I don't know whether Lord Elmwood does not expect secrecy on my part; and if he does——"

"But with all deference to your opinion," said Miss Woodley, (and with all deference did she speak) "don't you think, Mr. Sandford, that secrecy upon this occasion would be criminal? For consider the anguish that it may occasion to my friend; and if, by advising her, we can save her from——" She was proceeding.

"You may call it criminal, Madam, not to inform her of what I have hinted at," cried he; "but I call it a breach of confidence—if it *was* divulged to me in confidence——"

He was going to explain; but Miss Milner entered, and put an end to the discourse. She had been passing the whole morning at an auction, and had laid out near two hundred pounds in different things for which she had no one use, but bought them because they were said to be cheap—amongst the rest was a lot of books upon chemistry, and some Latin authors.

"Why, Madam," cried Sandford, looking over the catalogue where her purchases were marked by a pencil, "do



you know what you have done? You can't read a word of these books."

"Can't I, Mr. Sandford? But I assure you that you will be very much pleased with them, when you see how elegantly they are bound."

"My dear," said Mrs. Horton, "why have you bought china? You and my Lord Elmwood have more now than you have places to put them in."

"Very true, Mrs. Horton—I forgot that—but then you know I can give these away."

Lord Elmwood was in the room at the conclusion of this conversation—he shook his head and sighed.

"My Lord," said she, "I have had a very agreeable morning; but I wished for you; if you had been with me I should have bought a great many other things; but I did not like to appear unreasonable in your absence."

Sandford fixed his inquisitive eyes upon Lord Elmwood, to observe his countenance—he smiled, but appeared thoughtful.

"And, oh! my Lord, I have bought you a present," said she.

"I do not wish for a present, Miss Milner."

"What! not from me? Very well."

"If you present me with yourself, it is all that I ask."

Sandford moved upon his chair as if he sat uneasy.

"Why then, Miss Woodley," said Miss Milner, "*you* shall have the present. But then it won't suit you—it is for a gentleman. I'll keep it and give it to my Lord Frederick the first time I meet with him. I saw him this morning, and he looked divinely—I longed to speak to him."

Miss Woodley cast by stealth, an eye of apprehension upon Lord Elmwood's face, and trembled at seeing it flushed with resentment.



Sandford stared with both his eyes full upon him; then drew himself upright on his chair, and took a pinch of snuff upon the strength of the earl's uneasiness.

A silence ensued.

After a short time—"You all appear melancholy," said Miss Milner; "I wish I had not come home yet."

Miss Woodley was in agony—she saw Lord Elmwood's extreme displeasure, and dreaded lest he should express it by some words he could not recall, or she could not forgive—therefore, whispering to her she had something particular to say, she took her out of the room.

The moment she was gone, Mr. Sandford rose nimbly from his seat, rubbed his hands, walked briskly across the room, then asked Lord Elmwood in a cheerful tone, "Whether he dined at home to-day?"

That which had given Sandford cheerfulness, had so depressed Lord Elmwood, that he sat dejected and silent. At length he answered in a faint voice, "No, I believe I shall *not* dine at home."

"Where is your Lordship going to dine?" asked Mrs. Horton; "I thought we should have had your company to-day; Miss Milner dines at home, I believe."

"I have not yet determined where I shall dine," replied he, taking no notice of the conclusion of her speech.

"My Lord, if you mean to go to the hotel, I'll go with you, if you please," cried Sandford officiously.

"With all my heart, Sandford," and they both went out together, before Miss Milner returned to the apartment.



## CHAPTER XXV.

MISS Woodley, for the first time, disobeyed the will of Mr. Sandford; and as soon as Miss Milner and she were alone, repeated all he had revealed to her; accompanying the recital with her usual testimonies of sympathy and affection. But had the genius of Sandford presided over this discovery, it could not have influenced the mind of Miss Milner to receive the intelligence with a temper more exactly the opposite of that which it was the intention of the informant to recommend. Instead of shuddering at the menace Lord Elmwood had uttered, she said, she "dared him to perform it. He dares not," repeated she.

"Why dares not?" said Miss Woodley.

"Because he loves me too well; because his own happiness is too dear to him."

"I believe he loves you," replied Miss Woodley, "and yet there is a doubt if——"

"There shall be no longer a doubt," cried Miss Milner; "I'll put him to the proof."

"For shame, my dear! you talk inconsiderately: what can you mean by proof?"

"I mean I will do something that no prudent man *ought* to forgive; and yet, with all his vast share of prudence, *he* shall forgive it, and make a sacrifice of just resentment to partial affection."

"But if you should be disappointed, and he should *not* make the sacrifice?" said Miss Woodley.



"Then I have only lost a man who had no regard for me."

"He may have a great regard for you, notwithstanding."

"But for the love I have felt, and do still feel, for my Lord Elmwood, I will have something more than a *great* regard in return."

"You have his love, I am sure."

"But is it such as mine? *I* could love *him* if he had a thousand faults. And yet," said she, recollecting herself, "and yet, I believe his being faultless, was the first cause of my passion."

Thus she talked on, sometimes in anger, sometimes apparently in jest, till her servant came to let her know the dinner was served. Upon entering the dining-room, and seeing Lord Elmwood's place at table vacant, she started back. She was disappointed of the pleasure she expected in dining with him; and his sudden absence, so immediately after the intelligence that she had received from Miss Woodley, increased her disquietude. She drew her chair, and sat down with an indifference that predicted she would not eat; and as soon as she was seated, she placed her fingers sullenly upon her lips, nor touched her knife and fork, nor spoke a word in reply to anything that was said to her during the whole dinner. Miss Woodley and Mrs. Horton were both too well acquainted with the good disposition of her heart, to take offence, or appear to notice this behaviour. They dined, and said nothing either to provoke or soothe her. Just as the dinner was going to be removed, a loud rap came at the door. "Who is that?" said Mrs. Horton. One of the servants went to the window, and answered, "My Lord and Mr. Sandford, Madam."

"Come back to dinner, as I live," cried Mrs. Horton.

Miss Milner continued her position and said nothing; but at the corners of her mouth, which her fingers did not



entirely conceal, there were discoverable a thousand dimpled graces like small convulsive fibres, which a restrained smile upon Lord Elmwood's return had sent there.

Lord Elmwood and Sandford entered.

"I am glad you are returned, my Lord," said Mrs. Horton, "for Miss Milner has not tasted of one thing?"

"It was only because I had no appetite," returned she, blushing like crimson.

"We should not have come back," said Sandford, "but at the place where we went to dine, all the rooms were filled with company."

Lord Elmwood put the wing of a fowl on Miss Milner's plate, but without previously asking if she chose any; yet she condescended to eat; they spoke to each other, too, in the course of conversation, but it was with a reserve that appeared as if they had been quarrelling, and felt so to themselves, though no such circumstance had happened.

Two weeks passed away in this kind of distant behaviour on both sides, without either of them venturing a direct quarrel, and without either of them expressing (except inadvertently) their strong affection for each other.

During this time they were once, however, very near becoming the dearest friends in expression, as well as in sentiment. This arose from a favour that he granted, in compliance with her desire, though that desire had not been urged, but merely insinuated; and as it was a favour which he had refused to the repeated requests of many of his friends, the value of the obligation was heightened.

She and Miss Woodley had taken an airing to see the poor child, young Rushbrook. Lord Elmwood inquiring of the ladies how they had passed the morning, Miss Milner frankly told him; and added, what pain it gave her to leave the child behind, as he had again cried to come away with her.



"Go for him, then, to-morrow," said Lord Elmwood, "and bring him home."

"Home!" she repeated, with surprise.

"Yes," replied he, "if you desire it, this shall be his home; you shall be a mother, and I will, henceforward, be a father to him."

Sandford, who was present, looked unusually sour at this high token of regard for Miss Milner; yet, with resentment on his face, he wiped a tear of joy from his eye, for the boy's sake. His frown was the force of prejudice, his tear the force of nature.

Rushbrook was brought home; and whenever Lord Elmwood wished to shew a kindness to Miss Milner, without directing it immediately to her, he took his nephew upon his knee, talked to him, and told him, he "was glad they had become acquainted."

In the various, though delicate, struggles for power between Miss Milner and her guardian, there was not one person a witness to these incidents, who did not suppose, that all would at last end in wedlock; for the most common observer perceived that ardent love was the foundation of every discontent, as well as of every joy they experienced. One great incident, however, totally reversed the hope of all future accommodation.

The fashionable Lady G—— gave a masked ball; tickets were presented to persons of quality and fashion; among the rest, three were sent to Miss Milner. She had never been at a masquerade, and received them with ecstasy—the more especially as, the masque being at the house of a woman of fashion, she did not conceive there could be any objection to her going. She was mistaken; the moment she mentioned it to Lord Elmwood, he desired her, somewhat sternly, "Not to think of being there." She was vexed at the prohibition, but more at the manner in which



it was delivered, and boldly said that she should certainly go.

She expected a rebuke for this; but, what alarmed her much more, he said not a word; but he looked with a resignation which foreboded her greater sorrow than the severest reproaches would have done. She sat for a minute, reflecting how to rouse him from this composure; she first thought of attacking him with upbraidings; then she thought of soothing him, and at last of laughing at him. This was the most dangerous method of all, and yet, this she ventured upon.

"I am sure, your Lordship," said she, "with all your saintliness, can have no objection to my being present at the masquerade, if I go as a nun."

He made no reply.

"That is a habit," continued she, "which covers a multitude of faults; and, for that evening, I may have the chance of making a conquest even of you—nay, I question not, if, under that inviting attire, even the pious Mr. Sandford would not ogle me."

"Hush!" said Miss Woodley.

"Why hush?" cried Miss Milner, aloud, though Miss Woodley had spoken in a whisper. "I am sure," continued she, "I am only repeating what I have read in books about nuns and their confessors."

"Your conduct, Miss Milner," replied Lord Elmwood, "gives evident proofs of the authors you have read; you may spare yourself the trouble of quoting them."

Her pride was hurt at this, beyond bearing; and as she could not, like him, govern her anger, it flushed in her face, and almost forced her to tears.

"My Lord," said Miss Woodley, (in a tone so soft and peaceful, that it might have calmed the resentment of both,) "my Lord, suppose you were to accompany Miss



Milner? there are tickets for three, and you can then have no objection."

Miss Milner's brow was immediately smoothed; and she fetched a sigh, in anxious expectation that he would consent.

"I go, Miss Woodley?" he replied, with astonishment. "Do you imagine I would play the buffoon at a masquerade?"

Miss Milner's face changed to its former appearance.

"I have seen grave characters there, my Lord," said Miss Woodley.

"Dear Miss Woodley," cried Miss Milner, "why persuade Lord Elmwood to put on a mask, just at the time he has laid it aside?"

His patience was now tempted to its height, and he answered, "If you suspect me of inconsistency, Madam, you shall find me changed."

Pleased that she had been able at last to irritate him, she smiled with a degree of triumph, and in that humour was going to reply; but before she could speak four words, and before she thought of it, he abruptly left the room.

She was highly offended at this insult, and declared, "from that moment she banished him from her heart for ever." To prove that she set his love and his anger at equal defiance, she immediately ordered her carriage, and said, she "was going to some of her acquaintance, whom she knew to have tickets, and with whom she would fix upon the habit she was to appear in at the masquerade; for nothing, unless she was locked up, should alter the resolution she had formed of being there." To remonstrate at that moment, Miss Woodley knew would be in vain. Her coach came to the door, and she drove away.

She did not return to dinner, nor till it was late in the



evening. Lord Elmwood was at home ; but he never once mentioned her name.

She came home, after he had retired, in great spirits ; and then, for the first time in her whole life, appeared careless what he might think of her conduct : but her whole thoughts were occupied upon the business which had employed the chief part of her day, and her dress engrossed all her conversation, as soon as Miss Woodley and she were alone. She told her she had been shewn the greatest variety of beautiful and becoming dresses she had ever beheld ; “and yet,” said she, “I have at last fixed upon a very plain one ; but one I look so well in that you will hardly know me when I have it on.”

“You are seriously, then, resolved to go,” said Miss Woodley, “if you hear no more on the subject from your guardian ?”

“Whether I do hear or not, Miss Woodley, I am equally resolved to go.”

“But you know, my dear, he has desired you not ; and you used always to obey his commands.”

“As my guardian, I certainly did obey him ; and I could obey him as a husband ; but as a lover I will not.”

“Yet that is the way never to have him for a husband.”

“As he pleases ; for if he will not submit to be my lover, I will not submit to be his wife ; nor has he the affection that I require in a husband.”

Thus the old sentiments, repeated again and again, prevented a separation till towards morning.

Miss Milner, for that night, dreamed less of her guardian than of the masquerade. On the evening of the next day it was to be. She was up early, breakfasted in her dressing-room, and remained there most of the day, busied in a



thousand preparations for the night ; one of them was to arrange her hair in falling ringlets. Her next care was that her dress should display her fine person to the best advantage. It did so.

Miss Woodley entered as it was trying on, and was all astonishment at the elegance of the habit, and its beautiful effect upon her graceful figure ; but, most of all, she was astonished at her venturing on such a character ; for though it represented the goddess of Chastity, yet from the buskins and the petticoat festooned far above the ankle, it had, on a first glance, the appearance of a female much less virtuous. Miss Woodley admired this dress, yet objected to it ; but as she admired first, her objections after had no weight.

"Where is Lord Elmwood?" said Miss Milner ; "he must not see me."

"No, for Heaven's sake," cried Miss Woodley ; "I would not have him see you in such a disguise for the universe."

"And yet," returned the other with a sigh, "why am I then thus pleased with my dress? for I had rather he should admire me than all the world besides, and yet he alone must not see me in it."

"But he would not admire you so dressed," said Miss Woodley.

"How shall I contrive to avoid him," said Miss Milner, "if in the evening he should offer to hand me into my carriage? But I believe he will not be in good humour enough to do that."

"You had better dress at the house of the ladies with whom you go," said Miss Woodley ; and this was agreed upon.

At dinner they learnt that Lord Elmwood was to go that evening to Windsor, in order to be in readiness for the



King's hunt early in the morning. This intelligence having dispersed Miss Milner's fears, she concluded upon dressing at home.

Lord Elmwood appeared at dinner in an even, but not in a good temper. The subject of the masquerade was never mentioned, nor indeed was it once in his thoughts; for though he was offended at his ward's behaviour on the occasion, and considered that she committed a fault in telling him "she would go," yet he never suspected she meant to do so, not even at the time she said she did; much less that she would persist, coolly and deliberately, in so direct a contradiction to his will.

She, on her part, flattered herself that his going to Windsor was intended in order to give her an opportunity of passing the evening as she pleased, without his being obliged to know of it, and consequently to complain.

Miss Woodley, who was willing to hope as she wished, began to be of the same opinion; and, without reluctance, dressed herself as a wood-nymph to accompany her friend.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

AT half after eleven, Miss Milner's chair, and another with Miss Woodley, took them from Lord Elmwood's to call upon the party (wood-nymphs and huntresses) who were to accompany them, and make up the suite of Diana.

They had not left the house two minutes, when a thundering rap came at the door: it was Lord Elmwood in a post-chaise. Upon some occasion the next day's hunt had been deferred. He had been made acquainted with it, and came from Windsor at that late hour.

After he had informed Mrs. Horton and Mr. Sandford, who were sitting together, of the cause of his sudden return, and had some supper ordered to be brought in for him, he inquired—"What company had been supping there?"

"We have been alone the whole evening, my Lord," replied Mrs. Horton.

"Nay," returned he, "I saw two chairs, with several servants, come out of the door as I drove up, but what livery I could not discern."

"We have had no creature here," repeated Mrs. Horton.

"Nor has Miss Milner had visitors?" asked he.

This brought Mrs. Horton to her recollection, and she cried, "Oh! now I know——" and then checked herself, as if she knew too much.

"What do you know, Madam?" said he, sharply.

"Nothing," said Mrs. Horton, "I know nothing," and she lifted up her hands and shook her head.



"So all people say, who know a great deal," cried Sandford, "and I suspect that is at present your case."

"Then I know more than I wish, I am sure, Mr. Sandford," returned she, shrugging up her shoulders.

Lord Elmwood was all impatience.

"Explain, Madam, explain."

"Dear, my Lord," said she, "if your Lordship will recollect, you may just have the same knowledge that I have."

"Recollect what!" said he, sternly.

"The quarrel you and your ward had about the masquerade."

"What of that? She is not gone there?" he cried.

"I am not sure she is," returned Mrs. Horton; "but if your Lordship saw two sedan chairs going out of this house, I cannot but suspect it must be Miss Milner and my niece going to the masquerade."

He made no answer, but rang the bell violently. A servant entered.

"Send Miss Milner's maid hither," said he, "immediately." The man withdrew.

"Nay, my Lord," cried Mrs. Horton, "any of the other servants could tell you just as well, whether Miss Milner is at home or gone out."

"Perhaps not," replied he.

The maid entered.

"Where is your mistress?" said Lord Elmwood.

The woman had received no orders to conceal where the ladies had gone, and yet a secret influence which governs the thoughts of all waiting-women and chambermaids, whispered to her that she ought not to tell the truth.

"Where is your mistress?" repeated he, in a louder voice than before.

"Gone out, my Lord," she replied.



"Where?"

"My Lady did not tell me."

"And don't you know?"

"No, my Lord," she answered, and without blushing.

"Is this the night of the masquerade?" said he.

"I don't know, my Lord, upon my word; but I believe, my Lord, it is not."

Sandford, as soon as Lord Elmwood had asked the last question, ran hastily to the table, at the other side of the room, took something from it, and returned to his place again; and when the maid said, "It was not the night of the masquerade," he exclaimed—

"But it is, my Lord—it is; yes, it is," and shewing a newspaper in his hand, pointed to the paragraph which contained the information.

"Leave the room," said Lord Elmwood to the woman: "I have done with you." She went away.

"Yes, yes, here it is," repeated Sandford, with the paper still in his hand. He then read the paragraph—" '*The masquerade at the Right Honourable Lady G——'s this evening*'—This evening, my Lord, you find—'*it is expected will be the most brilliant of anything of the kind for these many years past.*'"

"They should not put such things in the papers," said Mrs. Horton, "to tempt young women to their ruin."

The word ruin grated upon Lord Elmwood's ear, and he said to the servant who came to wait on him while he supped, "Take the supper away."

He had not attempted either to eat, or even to sit down; and he now walked backwards and forwards in the room, lost in thought and care.

A little time after, one of Miss Milner's footmen came in upon some occasion, and Mr. Sandford said to him, "Pray did you attend your Lady to the masquerade?"



"Yes, Sir," replied the man.

Lord Elmwood stopped himself short in his walk, and said to the servant, "You did?"

"Yes, my Lord," replied he.

He walked again.

"I should like to know what she was dressed in," said Mrs. Horton. And turning to the servant, "Do you know what your Lady had on?"

"Yes, Madam," replied the man, "she was in men's clothes."

"How!" cried Lord Elmwood.

"You tell a story, to be sure," said Mrs. Horton to the servant.

"No," cried Sandford, "I am sure he does not; for he is an honest, good, young man, and would not tell a lie upon any account. Would you, Thomas?"

Lord Elmwood ordered Miss Milner's woman to be again sent up. She came.

"In what dress did your lady go to the masquerade?" he asked, and with a look so extremely morose, it seemed to command the answer in a single word, and that word to be truth.

A mind with a spark of sensibility more than this woman possessed could not have equivocated with such an interrogator; but her reply was, "She went in her own dress, my Lord."

"Was it a man's or a woman's?" asked he, with a look of the same command.

"Ha, ha, my Lord," half laughing and half crying, "a woman's dress, to be sure, my Lord."

On which Sandford cried—

"Call the footman up, and let him confront her."

He was called, but Lord Elmwood, now disgusted at the scene, withdrew to the further end of the room, and left Sandford to question them.



With all the authority and consequence of a country magistrate, Sandford, his back to the fire and the witnesses before him, began with the footman.

"In what dress do you say that you saw your lady decorated when you attended and went along with her to the masquerade?"

"In men's clothes," replied the man, boldly and firmly as before.

"Bless my soul, Thomas, how can you say such a thing?" cried the woman.

"What dress do *you* say she went in?" cried Sandford to her.

"In women's clothes, indeed, Sir."

"This is very odd," said Mrs. Horton.

"Had she on, or had she not on, a coat?" asked Sandford.

"Yes, Sir; a petticoat," replied the woman.

"Do *you* say she had on a petticoat?" said Sandford to the man.

"I can't answer exactly for that," replied he; "but I know she had boots on."

"They were not boots," replied the maid, with vehemence. "Indeed, Sir," turning to Sandford, "they were only half boots."

"My girl," said Sandford kindly to her, "your own evidence convicts your mistress. What has a woman to do with *any* boots?"

Impatient at this mummery, Lord Elmwood rose, ordered the servants out of the room, and then, looking at his watch, found it was near one. "At what hour am I to expect her home?" said he.

"Perhaps not till three in the morning," answered Mrs. Horton.

"Three! more likely six," cried Sandford.



"I can't wait with patience till that time," answered Lord Elmwood, with a deep and most anxious sigh.

"You had better go to bed, my Lord," said Mrs. Horton, "and, by sleeping, the time will pass away unperceived."

"If I *could* sleep, Madam."

"Will you play a game of cards, my Lord?" said Sandford; "for I will not leave you till she comes home. And though I am not used to sit up all night——"

"All night!" repeated Lord Elmwood; "she dares not stay all night."

"And yet, after going," said Sandford, "in defiance to your commands, I should suppose she dared."

"She is in good company, at least, my Lord," said Mrs. Horton.

"She does not know herself what company she is in," replied he.

"How should she," cried Sandford, "where every one hides his face?"

Till five o'clock in the morning, in conversation such as this, the hours lingered away. Mrs. Horton, indeed, retired to her chamber at two, and left the gentlemen to a more serious discourse, but a discourse still less advantageous to poor Miss Milner.

She, during this time, was at the scene of pleasure she had painted to herself; and all the pleasure it gave her was, that she was sure she should never desire to go to a masquerade again. Its crowd and bustle fatigued her, its freedom offended her delicacy, and, though she perceived that she was the first object of admiration in the place, yet there was one person still wanting to admire, and the regret at having transgressed his injunctions for so trivial an entertainment weighed upon her spirits and added to her weariness. She would have come away sooner than she did: but she could not, with any degree of good manners,



leave the company with whom she went ; and not till after four were they prevailed on to return.

Daylight just peeped through the shutters of the room in which Lord Elmwood and Sandford were sitting when the sound of her carriage and the sudden stop it made at the door caused Lord Elmwood to start from his chair. He trembled extremely, and looked pale. Sandford was ashamed to seem to notice it, yet he could not help asking him to take a glass of wine. He took it, and for once evinced he was reduced so low as to be *glad* of such a resource.

What exact passion thus agitated Lord Elmwood at this crisis it is hard to define. Perhaps it was indignation at Miss Milner's imprudence and exultation at being on the point of revenge. Perhaps his emotion arose from joy to find that she was safe returned ; perhaps it was perturbation at the grief he felt that he must upbraid her ; perhaps it was not one alone of these sensations, but all of them combined.

She, wearied out with the tedious night's dissipation, and far less joyous than melancholy, had fallen asleep as she rode home, and came half asleep out of her carriage. "Light me to my bedchamber instantly," said she to her maid, who waited in the hall to receive her.

But one of Lord Elmwood's valets went up to her and answered, "Madam, my Lord desires to see you before you retire."

"Your Lord !" she cried. "Is he not from town ?"

"No, Madam, my Lord has been at home ever since you went out, and has been sitting up with Mr. Sandford waiting for you."

She was wide awake immediately. The heaviness was removed from her eyes ; but fear, sorrow, and shame seized upon her heart. She leaned against her maid as if un-



able to support herself under those feelings, and said to Miss Woodley—

“Make my excuse. I cannot see him to-night—I am unfit—indeed I cannot.”

Miss Woodley was alarmed at the prospect of going to him by herself, and thus, perhaps, irritating him still more. She therefore said, “He has sent for *you*; for heaven’s sake do not disobey him a second time.”

“No, dear Madam, don’t,” cried her woman; “for he is like a lion. He has been scolding me.”

“Good God!” exclaimed Miss Milner, and in a tone that seemed prophetic: “then he is not to be my husband after all.”

“Yes,” cried Miss Woodley, “if you will only be humble and appear sorry. You know your power over him, and all may yet be well.”

She turned her speaking eyes upon her friend, the tears starting from them, her lips trembling, “Do I not appear sorry?” she cried.

The bell at that moment rang furiously, and they hastened their steps to the door of the apartment where Lord Elmwood was.

“No,” replied Miss Woodley to her last question; “this shuddering is only fright. Say to him you are sorry, and beg his pardon.”

“I cannot,” replied she, “if Mr. Sandford be with him.”

The servant opened the door, and she and Miss Woodley went in. Lord Elmwood by this time was composed, and received her with a slight inclination of his head. She bowed to him in return, and said, with some marks of humility—

“I suppose, my Lord, I have done wrong.”

“You have, indeed, Miss Milner,” answered he; “but do not suppose that I mean to upbraid you: I am, on the con-



trary, going to release you from any such apprehension *for the future.*"

Those last three words he delivered with a countenance so serious and so determined, with an accent so firm and so decided, they pierced through her heart. Yet she did not weep, nor even sigh; but her friend, knowing what she felt, exclaimed, "Oh!" as if for her.

She herself strove with her anguish, and replied (but with a faltering voice), "I expected as much, my Lord."

"Then, Madam, you perhaps expect *all* that I intend?"

"In regard to myself," she replied, "I suppose I do."

"Then," said he, "you may expect that in a few days we shall part."

"I am prepared for it, my Lord," she answered; and, while she said so, sank upon a chair.

"My Lord, what you have to say farther," said Miss Woodley, in tears, "defer till the morning: Miss Milner, you see, is not able to bear it now."

"I have nothing to *say* farther," replied he, coolly. "I have now only to act."

"Lord Elmwood," cried Miss Milner, divided between grief and anger, "you think to terrify me by your menaces; but I can part with you—Heaven knows I can. Your late behaviour has reconciled me to a separation.

On this he was going out of the room, but Miss Woodley, catching hold of him, cried, "Oh! my Lord, do not leave her in this sorrow. Pity her weakness, and forgive it." She was proceeding, and he seemed as if inclined to listen, when Sandford called out, in a tone of voice so harsh—

"Miss Woodley, what do you mean?" She gave a start, and desisted.

Lord Elmwood then turned to Sandford, and said, "Nay, Mr. Sandford, you need entertain no doubts of me. I have judged, and have deter——"



He was going to say *determined*; but Miss Milner, who dreaded the word, interrupted the period, and exclaimed, "Oh, could my poor father know the days of sorrow I have experienced since his death, how would he repent his fatal choice of a protector!"

This sentence, in which his friend's memory was recalled, with an additional allusion to her long and secret love for him, affected Lord Elmwood. He was much moved, but ashamed of being so, and as soon as possible conquered the propensity to forgive. Yet for a short interval he did not know whether to go out of the room or to remain in it; whether to speak or to be silent. At length he turned towards her, and said—

"Appeal to your father in some other form. In that," pointing to her dress, "he will not know you. Reflect upon him, too, in your moments of dissipation, and let his memory control your indiscretions—not merely in an hour of contradiction call peevishly upon his name, only to wound the dearest friend you have."

There was a degree of truth, and a degree of passionate feeling, in the conclusion of this speech, that alarmed Sandford: he caught up one of the candles, and, laying hold of his friend's elbow, drew him out of the room, crying, "Come, my Lord, come to your bedchamber—it is very late—it is morning—it is time to rise." And by a continual repetition of these words, in a very loud voice, he wilfully drowned whatever Lord Elmwood, or any other person, might have wished either to have said or to have heard.

In this manner Lord Elmwood was forced out of the apartment, and the evening's vicissitudes ended.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

Two whole days passed in the bitterest suspense on the part of Miss Milner, while neither one word nor look from Lord Elmwood denoted the most trivial change of the sentiments he had declared on the night of the masquerade. Still those sentiments, or intentions, were not explicitly delivered; they were more like intimations than solemn declarations—for though he had said, “He would never reproach her *for the future*,” and that “She might expect they should part,” he had not positively said they should; and upon this doubtful meaning of his words, she hung with the strongest agitation of hope and of fear.

Miss Woodley, seeing the distress of her mind, (much as she endeavoured to conceal it) entreated, nay, implored of her, to permit her to be a mediator; to suffer her to ask for a private interview with Lord Elmwood, and if she found him inflexible, to behave with a proper spirit in return; but if he appeared not absolutely averse to a reconciliation, to offer it in so cautious a manner, that it might take place without farther uneasiness on either side. But Miss Milner peremptorily forbade this, and acknowledging to her friend every weakness she felt on the occasion, yet concluded with solemnly declaring, “That after what had passed between her and Lord Elmwood, *he* must be the first to make a concession, before she herself would condescend to be reconciled.”

“I believe I know Lord Elmwood’s temper,” replied Miss



Woodley, "and I do not think he will be easily induced to beg pardon for a fault, which he thinks *you* have committed."

"Then he does not love me."

"Pshaw! Miss Milner, this is the old argument. He may love you too well to spoil you; consider that he is your guardian as well as your lover; he means also to become your husband; and he is a man of such nice honour, that he will not indulge you with any power before marriage, to which he does not intend to submit hereafter."

"But tenderness, affection, the politeness due from a lover to his mistress demands his submission; and as I now despair of enticing, I will oblige him to it—at least I'll make the experiment, and know my fate at once."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Invite Lord Frederick to the house, and ask my guardian's consent for our immediate union; you will then see what effect that measure will have upon his pride."

"But you will then make it too late for him to be humble. If you resolve on this, my dear Miss Milner, you are undone at once—you may thus hurry yourself into a marriage with a man you do not love, and the misery of your whole future life may be the result. Or, would you force Mr. Dorriforth (I mean Lord Elmwood) to another duel with my Lord Frederick?"

"No, call him Dorriforth,"—answered she, with the tears stealing from her eyes: "I thank you for calling him so; for by that name alone he is dear to me."

"Nay, Miss Milner, with what rapture did you not receive his love as Lord Elmwood!"

"But under this title he has been barbarous; under the first he was all friendship and tenderness."

Notwithstanding Miss Milner indulged herself in all these



soft bewailings to her friend—before Lord Elmwood she maintained a degree of pride and steadiness, which surprised even him, who perhaps thought less of her love for him than any other person. She now began to fear she had gone too far in discovering her affection, and resolved to make trial of a contrary method. She determined to retrieve that haughty character which had inspired so many of her admirers with passion, and take the chance of its effect upon this only suitor, to whom she ever acknowledged a mutual attachment. But although she resumed and acted this character well—so well, that every one but Miss Woodley thought her in earnest—yet, with nice and attentive anxiety, she watched even the slightest circumstances that might revive her hopes, or confirm her despair. Lord Elmwood's behaviour was calculated only to produce the latter—he was cold, polite, and perfectly indifferent. Yet, whatever his manners now were, they did not remove from her recollection what they had been—she recalled, with delight, the ardour with which he had first declared his passion to her, and the thousand proofs he had since given of its reality. Upon the constancy of his disposition, she depended for the hope that sentiments like these were not totally eradicated; and from the extreme desire which Mr. Sandford now, more than ever, discovered of depreciating her in his patron's esteem—from the now, more than common zeal, which urged him to take Lord Elmwood from her company whenever he had it in his power, she was led to believe, that while his friend entertained such strong fears of his relapsing into love, she had reason to indulge the strongest hopes that he would relapse.

But the reserve, and even indifference, that she had so well assumed for a few days, and which might, perhaps, have effected her design, she had not the patience to persevere in, without calling levity to their aid. She visited repeatedly



without saying where, or with whom ; kept later hours than usual ; appeared in the highest spirits ; sung, laughed, and never heaved a sigh, but when she was alone.

Still Lord Elmwood protracted a resolution that he was determined he would never break when taken.

Miss Woodley was excessively uneasy, and with cause ; she saw her friend was providing herself with a weight of cares, which she might soon find infinitely too much for her strength to bear ; she would have reasoned with her, but all her arguments had long since proved unavailing. She wished to speak to Lord Elmwood upon the subject, and (unknown to her) plead her excuse ; but he apprehended Miss Woodley's intention, and evidently shunned her. Mr. Sandford was now the only person to whom she could speak of Miss Milner, and the delight he took to expatiate on her faults caused more sorrow to her friend than not to speak of her at all. She, therefore, sat a silent spectator, waiting with dread for the time when she, who now scorned her advice, would fly to her in vain for comfort.

Sandford had, however, said one thing to Miss Woodley, which gave her a ray of hope. During their conversation on the subject, (not by way of consolation to her, but as a reproach to Lord Elmwood) he one day angrily exclaimed, "And yet, notwithstanding all this provocation, he has not come to the determination that he will think no more of her—he lingers and he hesitates—I never saw him so weak upon any occasion before."

This was joyful hearing to Miss Woodley ; still, she could not but reflect, the longer he was in coming to this determination, the more irrevocable it would be, when once taken ; and every moment that passed she trembled lest it should be the very moment in which Lord Elmwood should resolve to banish Miss Milner from his heart.

Amongst her unpardonable indiscretions, during this trial



upon the temper of her guardian, was the frequent mention of many gentlemen who had been her professed admirers, and the mention of them with partiality. Teased, if not tortured, by this, Lord Elmwood still behaved with a manly evenness of temper, and neither appeared provoked on the subject, nor insolently careless. In a single instance, however, this calmness was near deserting him.

Entering the drawing-room, one evening, he started, on seeing Lord Frederick Lawnley there, in earnest conversation with Miss Milner.

Mrs. Horton and Miss Woodley were both indeed present, and Lord Frederick was talking in an audible voice, upon some indifferent subjects; but with that impressive manner in which a man never fails to speak to the woman he loves, be the subject what it may. The moment Lord Elmwood started, which was the moment he entered, Lord Frederick arose.

"I beg your pardon, my Lord," said Lord Elmwood; "I protest I did not know you."

"I ought to entreat your Lordship's pardon," returned Lord Frederick, "for this intrusion, which an accident alone has occasioned. Miss Milner has been almost overturned by the carelessness of a lady's coachman, in whose carriage she was, and therefore suffered me to bring her home in mine."

"I hope you are not hurt," said Lord Elmwood to Miss Milner; but his voice was so much affected by what he felt, that he could scarce articulate the words. Not with the apprehension that she was hurt, was he thus agitated, for the gaiety of her manners convinced him *that* could not be the case, nor did he indeed suppose any accident of the kind mentioned had occurred; but the circumstance of unexpectedly seeing Lord Frederick had taken him off his guard, and being totally unprepared, he could not conceal



indications of the surprise, and of the shock it had given him.

Lord Frederick, who had heard nothing of his intended union with his ward, (for it was even kept a secret, at present, from every servant in the house,) imputed this discomposure to the personal resentment he might bear him, in consequence of their duel ; for though Lord Elmwood had assured the uncle of Lord Frederick, who once waited upon him on the subject of Miss Milner, that all resentment was, on his part, entirely at an end ; and that he was willing to consent to his ward's marriage with his nephew, if she would concur ; yet Lord Frederick doubted the sincerity of this protestation, and would still have had the delicacy not to have entered Lord Elmwood's house, had he not been encouraged by Miss Milner, and emboldened by his love. Personal resentment was therefore the construction he put upon Lord Elmwood's emotion on entering the room ; but Miss Milner and Miss Woodley knew his agitation to arise from a far different cause.

After his entrance, Lord Frederick did not attempt once to resume his seat, but having bowed most respectfully to all present, he took his leave ; while Miss Milner followed him as far as the door, and repeated her thanks for his protection.

Lord Elmwood was hurt beyond measure ; but he had a second concern, which was, that he had not the power to conceal how much he was affected. He trembled. When he attempted to speak, he stammered ; he perceived his face burning with confusion, and thus one confusion gave birth to another, till his state was pitiable.

Miss Milner, with all her assumed gaiety, had not the insolence to seem as if she observed him : she had only the confidence to observe him by stealth. And Mrs. Horton and Miss Woodley, having opportunely begun a dis-



course upon some trivial occurrences, gave him time to recover himself by degrees: still, it was merely by degrees; for the impression which this incident had made was deep, and not easily to be erased. The entrance of Mr. Sandford, who knew nothing of what had happened, was, however, another relief; for he began a conversation with him, which they very soon retired into the library to terminate. Miss Milner, taking Miss Woodley with her, went directly to her own apartment, and there exclaimed in rapture—

“He is mine—he loves me—and he is mine for ever.”

Miss Woodley congratulated her upon believing so, but confessed she herself “had her fears.”

“What fears?” cried Miss Milner: “don’t you perceive that he loves me!”

“I do,” said Miss Woodley, “but that I always believed; and, I think, if he loves you now, he has yet the good sense to know that he has reason to hate you.”

“What has good sense to do with love?” returned Miss Milner—“If a lover of mine suffers his understanding to get the better of his affection——”

The same arguments were going to be repeated; but Miss Woodley interrupted her, by requiring an explanation of her conduct as to Lord Frederick, whom, at least, she was treating with cruelty, if she only made use of his affection to stimulate that of Lord Elmwood.

“By no means, my dear Miss Woodley,” returned she. “I have, indeed, done with my Lord Frederick from this day, and he has certainly given me the proof I wanted of Lord Elmwood’s love; but then I did not engage him to this by the smallest ray of hope. No; do not suspect me of such artifice, while my heart was another’s; and I assure you, seriously, that it was from the circumstance he described he came with me home: yet, I must own, that



if I had not had this design upon Lord Elmwood's jealousy in idea, I would have walked on foot through the streets, rather than have suffered his rival's civilities. But he pressed his services so violently, and my Lady Evans (in whose coach I was when the accident happened) pressed me so violently to accept them, that he cannot expect any farther meaning from this acquiescence than my own convenience."

Miss Woodley was going to reply, when she resumed—

"Nay, if you intend to say I have done wrong, still I am not sorry for it, when it has given me such convincing proofs of Lord Elmwood's love. Did you see him? I am afraid you did not see how he trembled—nor observe how that manly voice faltered, as mine does sometimes?—his proud heart was humbled too, as mine is sometimes. Oh! Miss Woodley, I have been counterfeiting indifference to *him*—I now find that all *his* indifference to *me* has been counterfeit also, and that we not only love, but love equally."

"Suppose this all as you hope—I yet think it highly necessary that your guardian should be informed, seriously informed, it was mere accident (for, at present, that plea seems but as a subterfuge) which brought Lord Frederick hither."

"No, that will be destroying the work so successfully begun. I will not suffer any explanation to take place, but let my Lord Elmwood act just as his love shall dictate; and now I have no longer a doubt of its excess, instead of stooping to him, I wait in the certain expectation of his submission to me."



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN vain, for three long days, did Miss Milner wait impatiently for this submission; not a sign, not a symptom appeared. Nay, Lord Elmwood had, since the evening of Lord Frederick's visit, (which, at the time it took place, seemed to affect him so exceedingly) become just the same man he was before the circumstance occurred; except, indeed, that he was less thoughtful, and now and then cheerful; but without any appearance that his cheerfulness was affected. Miss Milner was vexed—she was alarmed—but was ashamed to confess those humiliating sensations, even to Miss Woodley. She supported, therefore, when in company, the vivacity she had so long assumed; but gave way, when alone, to a still greater degree of melancholy than usual. She no longer applauded her scheme of bringing Lord Frederick to the house, and was terrified lest, on some pretence, he should dare to call again. But as these were feelings which her pride would not suffer her to disclose even to her friend, who would have consoled with her, their effects were doubly poignant.

Sitting in her dressing-room one forenoon with Miss Woodley, and burdened with a load of grief that she blushed to acknowledge; while her companion was charged with apprehensions that she too was loath to disclose, one of Lord Elmwood's valets tapped gently at the door, and delivered a letter to Miss Milner. By the person who brought it, as well as by the address, she knew it came from Lord Elmwood, and laid it down upon her toilet, as if she was fearful to unfold it.



"What is that?" said Miss Woodley.

"A letter from Lord Elmwood," replied Miss Milner.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Miss Woodley.

"Nay," returned she, "it is, I have no doubt, a letter to beg my pardon." But her reluctance to open it plainly evinced she did not think so.

"Do not read it yet," said Miss Woodley.

"I do not intend it," replied she, trembling extremely.

"Will you dine first?" said Miss Woodley.

"No—for not knowing its contents, I shall not know how to conduct myself towards him."

Here a silence followed. Miss Milner took up the letter—looked earnestly at the hand-writing on the outside—at the seal—inspected its folds—and seemed to wish, by some equivocal method, to guess at the contents, without having the courage to come at the certain knowledge of them.

Curiosity, at length, got the better of her fears—she opened the letter, and, scarcely able to hold it while she perused it, read the following words:—

"MADAM,—While I considered you only as my ward, my friendship for you was unbounded; when I looked upon you as a woman formed to grace a fashionable circle, my admiration equalled my friendship; and when fate permitted me to behold you in the tender light of my betrothed wife, my soaring love left those humbler passions at a distance.

"That you have still my friendship, my admiration, and even my love, I will not attempt to deceive either myself or you by disavowing; but still, with a firm assurance, I declare that prudence outweighs them all; and I have not, from henceforward, the slightest desire to be regarded by you, in any other respect than as one 'who wishes you well.' That you



ever beheld me in the endearing quality of a destined and an affectionate husband, (such as I would have proved) has been a deception upon my hopes: they acknowledge the mistake, and are humbled—but I entreat you to spare their farther trial, and for a single week not to insult me with the open preference of another. In the short space of that period I shall have taken my leave of you—*for ever*.

“I shall visit Italy, and some other parts of the continent; from whence I propose passing to the West Indies, in order to inspect my possessions there:—nor shall I return to England till after a few years absence; in which time I hope to become once more reconciled to the change of state I am enjoined—a change I now most fervently wish could be entirely dispensed with.

“The occasion of my remaining here a week longer, is to settle some necessary affairs, among which the principal is, that of delivering to a friend, a man of worth and of tenderness, all those writings which have invested me with the power of my guardianship. He will, the day after my departure, (without one upbraiding word) resign them to you in my name; and even your most respected father, could he behold the resignation, would concur in its propriety.

“And now, my dear Miss Milner, let not affected resentment, contempt, or levity, oppose that serenity, which, for the week to come, I wish to enjoy. By complying with this request, give me to believe, that, since you have been under my care, you think I have, at least, faithfully discharged some part of my duty. And wherever I have been inadequate to your expectations, attribute my demerits to some infirmity of mind, rather than to a negligence of your happiness. Yet, be the cause what it will, since these faults have existed, I do not attempt to disavow or extenuate them, and I beg your pardon.

“However time, and a succession of objects, may eradicate



more tender sentiments, I am sure *never* to lose the liveliest anxiety for your welfare—and with all that solicitude, which cannot be described, I entreat for your own sake, for mine—when we shall be far asunder—and for the sake of your dead father's memory, that, *upon every important occasion, you will call your serious judgment to direct you.*

“I am, Madam,

“Your sincerest friend,

“ELMWOOD.”

After she had read every syllable of this letter carefully, it dropped from her hands ; but she uttered not a word. There was, however, a paleness in her face, a deadness in her eye, and a kind of palsy over her frame, which Miss Woodley, who had seen her in every stage of her unhappiness, never had seen before.

“I do not want to read the letter,” said Miss Woodley ; “your looks tell me its contents.”

“They will then discover to Lord Elmwood,” replied she, “what I feel ; but, Heaven forbid—that would sink me even lower than I am.”

Scarce able to move, she rose, and looked in her glass, as if to arrange her features, and impose upon him. Alas ! it was of no avail—a contented mind could alone effect what she desired.

“You must endeavour,” said Miss Woodley, “to feel the disposition you wish to make appear.”

“I will,” replied she. “I will feel a proper pride ; and, consequently, a proper indifference to this treatment.”

And so desirous was she to attain the appearance of these sentiments, that she made the strongest efforts to calm her thoughts, in order to acquire it.

“I have but a few days to remain with him,” she said to herself, “and we part for ever. During those few days it is



not only my duty to obey his commands, or rather comply with his request ; but it is also my wish to leave upon his mind an impression which may not add to the ill opinion he has formed of me, but, perhaps, serve to diminish it. If, in every other instance, my conduct has been blameable, he shall, at least in this, acknowledge its merit. The fate I have drawn upon myself, he shall find I can be resigned to ; and he shall be convinced that the woman, of whose weakness he has had so many fatal proofs, is yet in possession of some fortitude—fortitude to bid him farewell, without discovering one affected or one real pang, though her death should be the consequence of her suppressed sufferings.”

Thus she resolved and thus she acted. The severest judge could not have arraigned her conduct, from the day she received Lord Elmwood’s letter to the day appointed for his departure. She had, indeed, involuntary weaknesses, but none with which she did not struggle, and in general her struggles were victorious.

The first time she saw him after the receipt of his letter, was on the evening of the same day. She had a little concert of amateurs of music, and was herself singing and playing when he entered the room. The connoisseurs immediately perceived she made a false cadence ; but Lord Elmwood was no connoisseur in the art, and he did not observe it.

They occasionally spoke to each other during the evening, but the subjects were general ; and though their manners, every time they spoke, were perfectly polite, they were not marked with the smallest degree of familiarity. To describe his behaviour exactly, it was the same as his letter—polite, friendly, composed, and resolved. Some of the company stayed to supper, which prevented the embarrassment that must unavoidably have arisen, had the family been by themselves.



The next morning they breakfasted in their separate apartments — more company dined with them : in the evening, and at supper, Lord Elmwood was from home.

Thus all passed on as peaceably as he had requested, and Miss Milner had not betrayed one particle of frailty ; when, the third day at dinner, some gentlemen of his acquaintance being at table, one of them said—

“And so, my Lord, you absolutely set off on Tuesday morning?”

This was Friday.

Sandford and he both replied at the same time, “Yes.” And Sandford, but not Lord Elmwood, looked at Miss Milner when he spoke. Her knife and fork gave a sudden spring in her hand, but no other emotion witnessed what she felt.

“Aye, Elmwood,” cried another gentleman at table, “you’ll bring home, I am afraid, a foreign wife, and that I sha’n’t forgive.”

“It is his errand abroad, I make no doubt,” said another visitor.

Before he could return an answer, Sandford cried—

“And what objection to a foreigner for a wife? Do not crowned heads all marry foreigners? And who happier in the married state than some kings?”

Lord Elmwood directed his eyes to the side of the table, opposite to that where Miss Milner sat.

“Nay,” answered one of the guests, who was a country gentleman, “what do you say, ladies. Do you think my Lord ought to go out of his own nation for a wife?” and he looked at Miss Milner for the reply.

Miss Woodley, uneasy at her friend’s being thus forced to give an opinion upon so delicate a subject, endeavoured to satisfy the gentleman, by answering to the question herself—



"Whoever my Lord Elmwood marries, Sir," said Miss Woodley, "he, no doubt, will be happy."

"But what say you, Madam?" asked the visitor, still keeping his eyes on Miss Milner.

"That whoever Lord Elmwood marries, he *deserves* to be happy," she returned, with the utmost command of her voice and looks; for Miss Woodley, by replying first, had given her time to collect herself.

The colour flew to Lord Elmwood's face, as she delivered this short sentence: and Miss Woodley persuaded herself she saw a tear start in his eye.

Miss Milner did not look that way.

In an instant he found means to change the topic, but that of his journey still employed the conversation; and what horses, servants, and carriages he took with him, was minutely asked, and so accurately answered, either by himself or by Mr. Sandford, that Miss Milner, although she had known her doom before, now received a circumstantial account of it; and as circumstances increase or diminish all we feel, the hearing of these things in detail increased the bitterness of their truth.

Soon after dinner the ladies retired; and from that time, though Miss Milner's behaviour continued the same, yet her looks and her voice were totally altered. For the world she could not have looked cheerfully: for the world, she could not have spoken with a sprightly accent: she frequently began in one, but not three words did she utter before her tones sank into a melody of dejection. Not only her colour but her features became changed: her eyes lost their brilliancy, her lips seemed to hang without the power of motion; her head drooped, and her dress looked neglected.

Conscious of this appearance, and conscious of the cause from whence it arose, it was her desire to hide herself from the fatal object, the source of her despondency.



Accordingly, she sat alone, or with Miss Woodley, in her own apartment, as much as was consistent with that civility which her guardian had requested, and which forbade her from totally absenting herself.

Miss Woodley felt so acutely the torments of her friend, that had not her reason told her that the inflexible mind of Lord Elmwood was fixed beyond her power to shake, she had cast herself at his feet, and implored the return of his affection and tenderness, as the only means to save his once-beloved ward from an untimely grave. But her understanding—her knowledge of his firm and immovable temper, and of all his provocations—her knowledge of his word long since given to Sandford, “That if once resolved, he would not recall his resolution—the certainty of the various plans arranged for his travels, all convinced her, that by any interference, she would only expose Miss Milner’s love and delicacy to a contemptuous rejection.

If the conversation, when the family were assembled, did not every day turn upon the subject of Lord Elmwood’s departure—a conversation he evidently avoided himself—yet, every day, some new preparation for his journey struck either the ear or the eye of Miss Milner—and had she beheld a frightful spectre, she could not have shuddered with more horror than when she unexpectedly passed his large trunks in the hall, nailed and corded, ready to be sent off to meet him at Venice.

At the sight she flew from the company that chanced to be with her, and stole to the first lonely corner of the house to conceal her tears. She reclined her head upon her hands, and bedewed them with the sudden anguish that had overcome her. She heard a footstep advancing towards the spot where she hoped to have been secreted ; she lifted up her eyes, and saw Lord Elmwood. Pride was the first



emotion his presence inspired—pride, which arose from the humility into which she was plunged.

She looked at him earnestly, as if to imply, “What now my Lord?”

He only answered with a bow, which expressed, “I beg your pardon,” and immediately withdrew.

Thus each understood the other’s language, without either having uttered a word.

The just construction she put upon his looks and manner upon this occasion kept up her spirits for some little time; and she blessed Heaven for the singular favour of shewing to her, clearly, by this accident — his negligence of her sorrows,—his total indifference.

The next day was the eve of that on which he was to depart—of the day on which she was to bid adieu to Dorriforth, to her guardian, to Lord Elmwood; to all her hopes at once.

The moment she awoke on Monday morning, the recollection that this was, perhaps, the last day she was ever again to see him, softened all the resentment his yesterday’s conduct had raised. Forgetting his austerity, and all she had once termed cruelties, she now only remembered his friendship, his tenderness, and his love.

She was impatient to see him, and promised herself, for this last day, to neglect no one opportunity of being with him. For that purpose she did not breakfast in her own room, as she had done for several mornings before, but went into the breakfast room, where all the family in general met. She was rejoiced on hearing his voice as she opened the door, yet the mere sound made her tremble so much that she could scarcely totter to the table.

Miss Woodley looked at her as she entered, and was never so shocked at seeing her: for never had she yet seen her look so ill. As she approached, she made an inclination



of her head to Mrs. Horton, then to her guardian, as was her custom, when she first saw them in a morning: he looked in her face as he bowed in return, then fixed his eyes upon the fire-place, rubbed his forehead, and began talking with Mr. Sandford.

Sandford, during breakfast, by accident cast a glance upon Miss Milner. His attention was caught by her death-like countenance, and he looked earnestly. He then turned to Lord Elmwood to see if he was observing her appearance: he was not: and so much were her thoughts engaged on him alone, that she did not once perceive Sandford gazing at her.

Mrs. Horton, after a little while, observed it was a beautiful morning.

Lord Elmwood said he thought he heard it rain in the night.

Sandford cried, "for his part he slept too well to know." And then, unasked, held a plate with biscuits to Miss Milner. It was the first civility he had ever in his life offered her. She smiled at the whimsicality of the circumstance, but she took one in return for his attention. He looked grave beyond his usual gravity, and yet not with his usual ill-temper. She did not eat what she had so politely taken, but laid it down soon after.

Lord Elmwood was the first who rose from breakfast, and he did not return to dinner.

At dinner Mrs. Horton said she "hoped he would, however, favour them with his company to supper."

To which Sandford replied, "No doubt; for you will hardly any of you see him in the morning, as we shall be off by six or soon after."

Sandford was not going abroad with Lord Elmwood, but was to go with him as far as Dover.

These words of his, "*Not see Lord Elmwood in the*



*morning*," which conveyed the sense never again to see him after this evening, were like the knell of death to Miss Milner. She felt the symptoms of fainting, and, hurried by the dread of a swoon, snatched from the hand of a servant a glass of water, which Sandford had just then called for, and drank it hastily. As she returned the glass to the servant she began to apologize to Mr. Sandford; but, before she could utter what she intended, he said, rather kindly, "Never mind, you are welcome. I am glad you took it." She looked at him to observe whether he had really spoken kindly or ironically; but before his countenance could satisfy her, her thoughts were called away from that trivial matter and again fixed upon Lord Elmwood.

The moments seemed tedious till he came home to supper, and yet, when she reflected how short the remainder of the evening would be after that time, she wished to defer the hour of his return for months. At ten o'clock he arrived, and at half after ten the family, without any visitor, met at supper.

Miss Milner had considered that the period for her to counterfeit appearances was diminished now to a most contracted one; and she rigorously enjoined herself not to shrink from the little which remained. The certain end that would be so soon put to this painful deception encouraged her to struggle through it with redoubled zeal; and this was but necessary, as her weakness increased. She therefore listened, she talked, and even smiled with the rest of the company, nor did *their* vivacity seem to arise from a much less compulsive source than her own.

It was past twelve when Lord Elmwood looked at his watch, and, rising from his chair, went up to Mrs. Horton, and, taking her hand, said, "Till I see you again, Madam, I sincerely wish you every happiness."

Miss Milner fixed her eyes upon the table before her.



"My Lord," replied Mrs. Horton, "I sincerely wish you health and happiness likewise."

He then went to Miss Woodley, and, taking her hand, repeated much the same as he had said to Mrs. Horton.

Miss Milner now trembled beyond all power of concealment.

"My Lord," replied Miss Woodley, a good deal affected, "I sincerely hope my prayers for your happiness may be heard."

She and Mrs. Horton were both standing, as well as Lord Elmwood; but Miss Milner kept her seat till his eye was turned upon her and he moved slowly towards her. She then rose. Every one who was present, attentive to what he would now say and how she would receive what he said, here cast their eyes upon them and listened with impatience. They were all disappointed. He did not utter a syllable. Yet he took her hand and held it closely between his. He then bowed most respectfully and left her.

No sentence of "I wish you well; I wish you health and happiness." No "prayers for blessings on her." Not even the word "farewell" escaped his lips. Perhaps to have attempted any of these might have impeded his utterance.

She had behaved with fortitude the whole evening, and she continued to do so till the moment he turned away from her. Her eyes then overflowed with tears, and, in the agony of her mind, not knowing what she did, she laid her cold hand upon the person next to her. It happened to be Sandford; but, not observing it was he, she grasped his hand with violence. Yet he did not snatch it away, nor look at her with his wonted severity. And thus she stood, silent and motionless, while Lord Elmwood, now at the door, bowed once more to all the company and retired.

Sandford had still Miss Milner's hand fixed upon his; and, when the door was shut after Lord Elmwood, he turned his



head to look in her face, and turned it with some marks of apprehension for the grief he might find there. She strove to overcome that grief, and, after a heavy sigh, sat down as if resigned to the fate to which she was decreed.

Instead of following Lord Elmwood as usual, Sandford poured out a glass of wine and drank it. A general silence ensued for near three minutes. At last, turning himself round on his chair towards Miss Milner, who sat like a statue of despair at his side, "Will you breakfast with us to-morrow?" said he.

She made no answer.

"We sha'n't breakfast before half after six," continued he, "I dare say; and if you can rise so early—why, do."

"Miss Milner," said Miss Woodley, for she caught eagerly at the hope of her passing this night in less unhappiness than she had foreboded, "pray rise at that hour to breakfast. Mr. Sandford would not invite you if he thought it would displease Lord Elmwood."

"Not I," replied Sandford, churlishly.

"Then desire her maid to call her," said Mrs. Horton to Miss Woodley.

"Nay, she will be awake, I have no doubt," returned her niece.

"No," replied Miss Milner; "since Lord Elmwood has thought proper to take his leave of me without even speaking a word, by my own design never will I see him again." And her tears burst forth as if her heart burst at the same time.

"Why did not *you* speak to *him*?" cried Sandford. "Pray did *you* bid *him* farewell? And I don't see why one is not as much to be blamed in that respect as the other."

"I was too weak to say I wished him happy," cried Miss Milner; "but, Heaven is my witness, I do wish him so from my soul."



"And do you imagine he does not wish you so," cried Sandford. "You should judge him by your own heart; and what you feel for him, imagine he feels for you, my dear."

Though "*my dear*" is a trivial phrase, yet, from certain people and upon certain occasions, it is a phrase of infinite comfort and assurance. Mr. Sandford seldom said "my dear" to any one—to Miss Milner, never; and upon this occasion, and from him, it was an expression most precious.

She turned to him with a look of gratitude; but as she only looked, and did not speak, he rose up, and soon after said, with a friendly tone he had seldom used in her presence, "I sincerely wish you a good night."

As soon as he was gone Miss Milner exclaimed, "However my fate may have been precipitated by the unkindness of Mr. Sandford, yet, for that particle of concern which he has shewn for me this evening, I will always be grateful to him."

"Ay," cried Mrs. Horton, "good Mr. Sandford may shew his kindness now, without any danger from its consequences. Now Lord Elmwood is going away for ever he is not afraid of your seeing him once again." And she thought she praised him by this suggestion.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEN Miss Milner retired to her bed-chamber, Miss Woodley went with her, nor would leave her the whole night. But in vain did she persuade her to rest. She absolutely refused, and declared she would never from that hour indulge repose. "The part I undertook to perform," cried she, "is over. I will now, for my whole life, appear in my own character, and give loose to the anguish I endure."

As daylight shewed itself, "And yet I might see him once again," said she. "I might see him within these two hours, if I pleased, for Mr. Sandford invited me."

"If you think, my dear Miss Milner," said Miss Woodley, "that a second parting from Lord Elmwood would but give you a second agony, in the name of Heaven do not see him any more; but if you hope your mind would be easier were you to bid each other adieu in a more direct manner than you did last night, let us go down and breakfast with him. I'll go before and prepare him for your reception. You shall not surprise him. And I will let him know it is by Mr. Sandford's invitation you are coming."

She listened with a smile to this proposal, yet objected to the indelicacy of her wishing to see him after he had taken his leave; but as Miss Woodley perceived that she was inclined to infringe this delicacy, of which she had so proper a sense, she easily persuaded her it was impossible for the most suspicious person (and Lord Elmwood was far from



such a character) to suppose that the paying him a visit at that period of time could be with the most distant imagination of regaining his heart, or of altering one resolution he had taken.

But though Miss Milner acquiesced in this opinion, yet she had not the courage to form the determination that she would go.

Daylight now no longer peeped, but stared upon them. Miss Milner went to the looking-glass, breathed upon her hands and rubbed them on her eyes, smoothed her hair, and adjusted her dress; yet said, after all, "I dare not see him again."

"You may do as you please," said Miss Woodley, "but I *will*. I that have lived for so many years under the same roof with him, and on the most friendly terms, and he going away, perhaps for these ten years, perhaps for ever, I should think it a disrespect not to see him to the last moment of his remaining in the house."

"Then do you go," said Miss Milner, eagerly; "and if he should ask for me I will gladly come, you know; but if he does not ask for me, I will not—and pray don't deceive me."

Miss Woodley promised her not to deceive her; and soon after, as they heard the servants pass about the house, and the clock had struck six, Miss Woodley went to the breakfast-room.

She found Lord Elmwood there in his travelling-dress, standing pensively by the fire-place; and, as he did not dream of seeing her, he started when she entered, and, with an appearance of alarm, said, "Dear Miss Woodley what's the matter?" She replied, "Nothing, my Lord; but I could not be satisfied without seeing your Lordship once again, while I had it in my power."

"I thank you," he returned, with a sigh—the heaviest



and most intelligent sigh she ever heard him condescend to give. She imagined, also, that he looked as if he wished to ask how Miss Milner did, but would not allow himself the indulgence. She was half inclined to mention her to him, and was debating in her mind whether she should or not, when Mr. Sandford came into the room, saying, as he entered—

“For Heaven’s sake, my Lord, where did you sleep last night?”

“Why do you ask?” said he.

“Because,” replied Sandford, “I went into your bed-chamber just now and I found your bed made. You have not slept there to-night.”

“I have slept nowhere,” returned he. “I could not sleep, and, having some papers to look over, and to set off early, I thought I might as well not go to bed at all.”

Miss Woodley was pleased at the frank manner in which he made this confession, and could not resist the strong impulse to say, “You have done just then, my Lord, like Miss Milner; for she has not been in bed the whole night.”

Miss Woodley spoke this in a negligent manner, and yet Lord Elmwood echoed back the words with solicitude, “Has not Miss Milner been in bed the whole night?”

“If she is up, why does not she come to take some coffee?” said Sandford, as he began to pour it out.

“If she thought it would be agreeable,” returned Miss Woodley, “I dare say she would.” And she looked at Lord Elmwood while she spoke, though she did not absolutely address him; but he made no reply.

“Agreeable!” returned Sandford, angrily. “Has she, then, a quarrel with anybody here? Or does she suppose anybody here bears enmity to *her*? Is she not in peace and charity?”

“Yes,” replied Miss Woodley; “that I am sure she is.”



"Then bring her hither," cried Sandford, "directly. Would she have the wickedness to imagine we are not all friends with her?"

Miss Woodley left the room, and found Miss Milner almost in despair lest she should hear Lord Elmwood's carriage drive off before her friend's return.

"Did he send for me?" were the words she uttered as soon as she saw her.

"Mr. Sandford did, in his presence," returned Miss Woodley; "and you may go with the utmost decorum, or I would not tell you so."

She required no protestations of this, but readily followed her beloved adviser, whose kindness never appeared in so amiable a light as at that moment.

On entering the room, through all the dead white of her present complexion, she blushed to a crimson. Lord Elmwood rose from his seat and brought a chair for her to sit down.

Sandford looked at her inquisitively, sipped his tea, and said he never made tea to his own liking.

Miss Milner took a cup, but had scarcely strength to hold it.

It seemed but a very short time they were at breakfast, when the carriage that was to take Lord Elmwood away drove to the door. Miss Milner started at the sound; so did he. But she had nearly dropped her cup and saucer; on which Sandford took them out of her hand, saying—

"Perhaps you had rather have coffee?"

Her lips moved, but he could not hear what she said.

A servant came in and told Lord Elmwood the carriage was at the door.

He replied, "Very well." But, though he had breakfasted, he did not attempt to move.

At last, rising briskly, as if it was necessary to go in haste



when he did go, he took up his hat, which he had brought with him into the room, and was turning to Miss Woodley to take his leave, when Sandford cried, "My Lord, you are in a great hurry." And then, as if he wished to give poor Miss Milner every moment he could, added, looking about, "I don't know where I have laid my gloves."

Lord Elmwood, after repeating to Miss Woodley his last night's farewell, now went up to Miss Milner, and, taking one of her hands, again held it between his, but still without speaking; while she, unable to suppress her tears as heretofore, suffered them to fall in torrents.

"What is all this?" cried Sandford, going up to them in anger.

They neither of them replied or changed their situation.

"Separate this moment," cried Sandford, "or resolve to be separated only by—death."

The commanding and awful manner in which he spoke this sentence made them both turn to him in amazement, and, as it were, petrified with the sensation his words had caused.

He left them for a moment, and, going to a small book-case in one corner of the room, took out of it a book, and, returning with it in his hand, said—

"Lord Elmwood, do you love this woman?"

"More than my life," he replied, with the most heartfelt accents.

He then turned to Miss Milner, "Can you say the same by him?"

She spread her hands over her eyes, and exclaimed, "Oh, Heavens!"

"I believe you *can* say so," returned Sandford, "and, in the name of God and your own happiness, since this is the state of you both, let me put it out of your power to part."

Lord Elmwood gazed at him with wonder; and yet as if



enraptured by the sudden change this conduct gave to his prospects.

She sighed with a kind of trembling ecstasy; while Sandford, with all the dignity of his official character, delivered these words—

“My Lord, while I thought my counsel might save you from the worst of misfortunes—conjugal strife, I importuned you hourly, and set forth your danger in the light it appeared to me. But though old, and a priest, I can submit to think I have been in error; and I now firmly believe it is for the welfare of you both to become man and wife. My Lord, take this woman’s marriage vows. You can ask no fairer promises of her reform; she can give you none half so sacred, half so binding; and I see by her looks that she will mean to keep them. And, my dear,” continued he, addressing himself to her, “act but under the dominion of those vows towards a husband of sense and virtue like him, and you will be all that I, himself, or even Heaven can desire. Now, then, Lord Elmwood, this moment give her up for ever, or this moment constrain her with the rites which I shall perform by such ties from offending you as she shall not *dare* to violate.”

Lord Elmwood struck his forehead in doubt and agitation; but, still holding her hand, cried, “I cannot part from her.” Then, feeling this reply as equivocal, he fell upon his knees and said, “Will you pardon my hesitation; and will you, in marriage, shew me that tender love you have not shewn me yet? Will you, in possessing all my affections, bear with all my infirmities?”

She raised him from her feet, and, by the expression of her countenance, by the tears that bathed his hands, gave him confidence.

He turned to Sandford, then, placing her by his own side, as the form of matrimony requires, gave this for a sign to



Sandford that he should begin the ceremony; on which he opened his book and—married them.

With voice and manners so serious, so solemn, and so fervent, he performed these holy rites, that every idea of jest, or even of lightness, was absent from the mind of the whole party present.

Miss Milner, covered with shame, sunk on the bosom of Miss Woodley.

When the ring was wanting, Lord Elmwood supplied it with one from his own hand; but throughout all the rest of the ceremony he appeared lost in zealous devotion to Heaven. Yet no sooner was it finished than his thoughts descended to this world. He embraced his bride with all the transport of the fondest, happiest bridegroom, and in raptures called her by the endearing name of "Wife."

"But still, my Lord," cried Sandford, "you are only married by your own Church and conscience, not by your wife's, or by the law of the land; and let me advise you not to defer that marriage long, lest in the time you should disagree, and she refuse to become your legal spouse."

"I think there is danger," returned Lord Elmwood, "and therefore our second marriage must take place to-morrow."

To this the ladies objected, and Sandford was to fix their second wedding-day, as he had done their first. He, after consideration, gave them four days.

Miss Woodley then recollected (for every one else had forgot it) that the carriage was still at the door to convey Lord Elmwood far away. It was, of course, dismissed; and one of those great incidents of delight which Miss Milner that morning tasted was to look out of the window and see this very carriage drive from the door unoccupied.

Never was there a more rapid change from despair to happiness—to happiness perfect and supreme—than was



that which Miss Milner and Lord Elmwood experienced in one single hour.

The few days that intervened between this and their second marriage were passed in the delightful care of preparing for that happy day ; yet with all its delights inferior to the first, when every unexpected joy was doubled by the once expected sorrow.

Nevertheless, on that first wedding-day, that joyful day which restored her lost lover to her hopes again: even on that *very* day, after the sacred ceremony was over, Miss Milner (with all the fears, the tremors, the superstition of her sex) felt an excruciating shock, when, looking on the ring Lord Elmwood had put upon her finger, in haste, when he married her, she perceived it was a—  
mourning ring.



## CHAPTER XXX.

NOT any event, throughout life, can arrest the reflection of a thoughtful mind more powerfully, or leave a more lasting impression, than that of returning to a place after a few years' absence, and observing an entire alteration in respect to all the persons who once formed the neighbourhood. To find that many, who but a few years before were left in their bloom of youth and health, are dead—to find that children left at school are married and have children of their own—that some, who were left in riches, are reduced to poverty—that others, who were in poverty, are become rich—to find those once renowned for virtue, now detested for vice—roving husbands grown constant—constant husbands become rovers—the firmest friends changed to the most implacable enemies—beauty faded—in a word, every change to demonstrate that—

“All is transitory on this side the grave.”

Guided by a wish that the reflecting reader may experience the sensation which an attention to circumstances like these must excite, he is desired to imagine seventeen years elapsed since he has seen or heard of any of those persons who, in the foregoing part of this narrative have been introduced to his acquaintance; and then, supposing himself at the period of those seventeen years, follow the sequel of their history.

To begin with the first female object of this story: the



beautiful, the beloved Miss Milner—she is no longer beautiful—no longer beloved—no longer—tremble while you read it!—no longer—virtuous.

Dorriforth, the pious, the good, the tender Dorriforth, is become a hard-hearted tyrant. The compassionate, the feeling, the just Lord Elmwood, an example of implacable rigour and injustice.

Miss Woodley is grown old, but less with years than grief.

The boy, Rushbrook, is become a man; and the apparent heir of Lord Elmwood's fortune; while his own daughter—his only child by his once adored Miss Milner, he refuses ever to see again, in vengeance to her mother's crimes.

The least wonderful change is, the death of Mrs. Horton. Except—

Sandford, who remains much the same as heretofore.

We left Lady Elmwood at the summit of human happiness—a loving and beloved bride. We now find her upon her death-bed.

At thirty-five her “course was run,”—a course full of perils, of hopes, of fears, of joys, and, at the end, of sorrows—all exquisite of their kind, for exquisite were the feelings of her susceptible heart.

At the commencement of this story, her father is described in the last moments of his life. with all his cares fixed upon her, his only child. How vain these cares!—how vain every precaution that was taken for her welfare! She knows, she reflects upon this; and yet, impelled by that instinctive power which actuates a parent, Lady Elmwood, on *her* dying day, has no worldly thoughts, but that of the future happiness of an only child. To every other prospect in her view, “Thy will be done!” is her continual exclamation; but where the misery of her daughter presents itself,



the expiring penitent would there combat the will of Heaven.

To detail the progression by which vice gains a predominancy in the heart, may be a useful lesson ; but it is one so little to the gratification of most readers, that the degrees of misconduct by which Lady Elmwood fell are not meant to be related here ; but instead of picturing every occasion of her fall, to come briefly to the events that followed.

There are, nevertheless, some articles under the former class, which ought not to be entirely omitted.

Lord Elmwood, after four years' enjoyment of the most perfect happiness that marriage could give—after becoming the father of a beautiful daughter, whom he loved with a tenderness almost equal to his love of her mother—was under the indispensable necessity of leaving them both for a time, in order to rescue from the depredation of his own steward his very large estates in the West Indies. His voyage was tedious—his residence there, from various accidents, was prolonged from time to time, till near three years had at length passed away.

Lady Elmwood, at first only unhappy, became at last provoked ; and giving way to that irritable disposition which she had so seldom governed, resolved, in spite of his injunctions, to divert the melancholy hours caused by his absence, by mixing in the gay circles of London.

Lord Elmwood at this time, and for many months before, had been detained abroad by a severe and dangerous illness, which a too cautious fear of her uneasiness had prompted him to conceal ; and she received his frequent apologies for not returning with a suspicion and resentment they were calculated, but not intended, to inspire.

To violent anger succeeded a degree of indifference still more fatal. Lady Elmwood's heart was not formed for such



a state ; there, where all the tumultuous passions harboured by turns, one among them soon found the means to occupy all vacancies—a passion commencing innocently, but terminating in guilt.

The dear object of her fondest, her truest affections, absent far off ; those affections painted the time so irksome that was past ; so wearisome that which was still to come ; that she flew from the present tedious solitude, to the dangerous society of one, whose mind, depraved by fashionable vices, could not repay her for a moment's loss of him, whose felicity she destroyed, whose dishonour she accomplished. Or if the delirium gave her a moment's recompense, what were her sufferings, her remorse, when she was awakened from the fleeting joy by the arrival of her husband ?

Happy, transporting, would have been that arrival but a few months sooner ! As it would then have been unbounded happiness, it was now—but language affords no word that can describe Lady Elmwood's sensations on being told her lord was arrived, and that necessity alone had so long delayed his return.

Guilty, but not hardened in her guilt, her pangs, her shame were the more excessive. She fled from the place at his approach—fled from his house—never again to return to a habitation where he was the master. She did not however, elope with her paramour, but escaped to shelter herself in a most dreary retreat, where she partook of no one comfort from society, or from life, but the still unremitting friendship of Miss Woodley. Even her infant daughter she left behind, nor would allow herself the consolation of her innocent, though reproachful, smiles. She left her in her father's house, that she might be under his virtuous protection—parted with her, as she thought, for ever, with all the agonies with which mothers part from



their infant children. And yet those agonies were still more poignant on beholding the child sent after her, as the perpetual outcast of its father.

Lord Elmwood's love to his wife had been extravagant—the effect of his hate was the same. Beholding himself separated from her by a barrier not ever to be removed, he vowed, in the deep torments of his revenge, never to be reminded of her by one individual object, much less by one so near to her as her child. To bestow upon that child his affections would be, he imagined, still, in some sort; to divide them with the mother.

Firm in his resolution, the beautiful Matilda was, at the age of six years, sent out of her father's house, and received by her mother with all the tenderness, but with all the anguish, of those parents, who behold their offspring visited by the punishment due only to their own offences.

While this rigid act was executing by Lord Elmwood's agents at his command, himself was engaged in an affair of still weightier importance—that of life or death. He determined upon his own death, or the death of the man who had wounded his honour and destroyed his happiness. A duel with his old antagonist was the result of this determination; nor was the Duke of Avon (who before the decease of his father and eldest brother had been Lord Frederick Lawnley) averse from giving him all the satisfaction he required; for it was no other than he, whose passion for Lady Elmwood had still subsisted, and whose address in gallantry left no means unattempted for the success of his designs,—no other than he (who, next to Lord Elmwood, had been of all her lovers the most favoured), to whom Lady Elmwood sacrificed her own and her husband's future peace, and thus gave to his vanity a prouder triumph than if she had never bestowed her hand in marriage on another.

This triumph, however, was but short: a month only, after



the return of Lord Elmwood, the Duke was called upon to answer for his guilt, and was left on the ground, where they met, so defaced with scars, as never again to endanger the honour of a husband. As Lord Elmwood was inexorable to all accommodation, their engagement had continued for a long space of time ; nor could anything but the assurance that his opponent was slain have at last torn him from the field, though himself was dangerously wounded.

Yet even during the period of his danger, while for days he lay in the continual expectation of his own dissolution, not all the entreaties of his dearest, most intimate, and most respected friends, could prevail upon him to pronounce forgiveness of his wife, or to suffer them to bring his daughter to him for his last blessing.

Lady Elmwood, who was made acquainted with the minutest circumstance as it passed, appeared to wait the news of her husband's decease with patience ; but upon her brow and in every lineament of her face was marked that his death was an event she would not for a day survive, and she would have left her child an orphan, in such a case, to have followed Lord Elmwood to the tomb. She was prevented the trial ; he recovered, and from the ample vengeance he had obtained, upon the irresistible person of the Duke, he seemed, in a short time, to regain his tranquillity.

He recovered, but Lady Elmwood fell sick and languished. Possessed of youth to struggle with her woes, she still lingered on, till near ten years' decline had brought her to that period, with which the reader is now to be presented.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

IN a lonely country on the borders of Scotland, a single house by the side of a dreary heath, was the residence of the once gay, volatile Miss Milner. In a large gloomy apartment of this solitary habitation (the windows of which scarcely rendered the light accessible) was laid upon her death-bed the once lovely Lady Elmwood—pale, half-suffocated from the loss of breath; yet her senses perfectly clear and collected, which served but to sharpen the anguish of dying.

In one corner of the room, by the side of an old-fashioned settee, kneels Miss Woodley, praying most devoutly for her still beloved friend, but in vain endeavouring to pray composedly—floods of tears pour down her furrowed cheeks, and frequent sobs of sorrow break through each pious ejaculation.

Close by her mother's side, one hand supporting her head, the other drying from her face the cold dew of death, behold Lady Elmwood's daughter—Lord Elmwood's daughter too—yet he is far away, negligent of what either suffers. Lady Elmwood turns to her often, and attempts an embrace, but her feeble arms forbid, and they fall motionless. The daughter, perceiving these ineffectual efforts, has her whole face convulsed with grief: she kisses her mother; holds her to her bosom; and hangs upon her neck, as if



she wished to cling there, not to be parted even by the grave.

On the other side of the bed sits Sandford—his hairs grown white—his face wrinkled with age—his heart the same as ever—the reprover, the enemy of the vain, the idle, and the wicked, but the friend and comforter of the forlorn and miserable.

Upon those features where sarcasm, reproach, and anger dwelt, to threaten and alarm the sinner, mildness, tenderness, and pity beamed, to support and console the penitent. Compassion changed his language, and softened all those harsh tones that used to denounce perdition.

“In the name of God,” said he to Lady Elmwood, “of that God, who suffered for you, and, suffering, knew and pitied all our weaknesses—by him, who has given his word to take *compassion on the sinner’s tears*, I bid you hope for mercy. By that innocence in which you once lived, be comforted. By the sorrows you have known since your degradation, hope, that in some measure, at least, you have atoned. By the sincerity that shone upon your youthful face when I joined your hand, and those thousand virtues you have since given proofs of, trust that you were not born to die *the death of the wicked*.”

As he spoke these words of consolation, her trembling hand clasped his—her dying eyes darted a ray of brightness—but her failing voice endeavoured in vain to articulate. At length, fixing her looks upon her daughter as their last dear object, she was just understood to utter the word, “Father.”

“I understand you,” replied Sandford, “and by all that influence I ever had over him, by my prayers, my tears,” (and they flowed as he spoke) “I will implore him to own his child.”

She could now only smile in thanks.



“And if I should fail,” continued he, “yet while I live she shall not want a friend and protector—all an old man, like me, can answer for——” here his grief interrupted him.

Lady Elmwood was sufficiently sensible of his words and their import, to make a sign as if she wished to embrace him; but finding her life leaving her fast, she reserved this last token of love for her daughter: with a struggle she lifted herself from her pillow, clung to her child—and died in her arms.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

LORD ELMWOOD was by nature, and more from education, of a serious, thinking and philosophic turn of mind. His religious studies had completely taught him to consider this world but as a passage to another ; to enjoy with gratitude what Heaven in its bounty should bestow, and to bear with submission whatever in its vengeance it might inflict. In a greater degree than most people he practised this doctrine ; and as soon as the shock which he received from Lady Elmwood's infidelity was abated, an entire calmness and resignation ensued ; but still of that sensible and feeling kind that could never suffer him to forget the happiness he had lost ; and it was this sensibility which urged him to fly from its more keen recollection ; and which he avowed as the reason why he would never permit Lady Elmwood, or even her child, to be named in his hearing. But this injunction (which all his friends, and even the servants in the house who attended his person, had received) was, by many people, suspected rather to proceed from his resentment than his tenderness : nor did he deny, that resentment co-operated with his prudence ; for prudence he called it, not to remind himself of happiness he could never taste again, and of ingratitude that might impel him to hatred ; and prudence he called it, not to form another attachment near to his heart, more especially so near as a parent's, which might again expose him to all the



torments of ingratitude from an object whom he affectionately loved.

Upon these principles he adopted the unshaken resolution never to acknowledge Lady Matilda as his child ; or, acknowledging her as such, never to see, to hear of, or take one concern whatever in her fate and fortune. The death of her mother appeared a favourable time, had he been so inclined, to have recalled this declaration which he had solemnly and repeatedly made. She was now destitute of the protection of her other parent, and it became his duty, at least, to provide her a guardian, if he did not choose to take that tender title upon himself :—but to mention either the mother or child to Lord Elmwood was an equal offence, and prohibited in the strongest terms to all his friends and household ; and as he was an excellent good master, a sincere friend, and a most generous patron, not one of his acquaintance or dependents was hardy enough to incur his certain displeasure, which was always violent to excess, by even the official intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death.

Sandford himself, intimidated through age, or by the austere and morose manners which Lord Elmwood had of late years evinced ; Sandford wished, if possible, that some other would undertake the dangerous task of recalling to his memory that there ever was such a person as his wife. He advised Miss Woodley to write a proper letter to him on the subject ; but she reminded him that such a step would be more perilous to her than to any other person, as she was the most destitute being on earth, without the benevolence of Lord Elmwood. The death of her aunt, Mrs. Horton, had left her solely relying on the bounty of Lady Elmwood, and now her death had left her totally dependent upon the Earl—for Lady Elmwood, though she had separate effects, had long before her demise declared it was not her intention



to leave a sentence behind her in the form of a will. She had no will, she said, but what she would wholly submit to Lord Elmwood ; and, if it were even his will that her child should live in poverty as well as banishment, it should be so. But, perhaps, in this implicit submission to him, there was a distant hope, that the necessitous situation of his daughter might plead more forcibly than his parental love ; and that knowing her bereft of every support but through himself, that idea might form some little tie between them, and be at least a token of the relationship.

But as Lady Elmwood anxiously wished this principle upon which she acted should be concealed from his suspicion, she included her friend, Miss Woodley, in the same fate ; and thus the only persons dear to her she left, but at Lord Elmwood's pleasure, to be preserved from perishing in want. Her child was too young to advise her on this subject, her friend too disinterested ; and at this moment they were both without the smallest means of subsistence, except through the justice or compassion of Lord Elmwood. Sandford had, indeed, promised his protection to the daughter ; but his liberality had no other source than from his patron, with whom he still lived as usual, except during part of the winter, when the Earl resided in town ; he then mostly stole a visit to Lady Elmwood. On this last visit he stayed to see her buried.

After some mature deliberations, Sandford was now preparing to go to Lord Elmwood at his house in town, and there to deliver himself the news that must sooner or later be told ; and he meant also to venture, at the same time, to keep the promise he had made to his dying lady : but the news reached his Lordship before Sandford arrived : it was announced in the public papers, and by that means first came to his knowledge.

He was breakfasting by himself, when the newspaper that



first gave the intelligence of Lady Elmwood's death was laid before him. The paragraph contained these words :—

“On Wednesday last died, at Dring Park, a village in Northumbérland, the Right Honourable Countess Elmwood. This lady, who has not been heard of for many years in the fashionable world, was a rich heiress, and of extreme beauty ; but although she received overtures from many men of the first rank, she preferred her guardian, the present Lord Elmwood (then Mr. Dorriforth) to them all—and it is said their marriage was followed by an uncommon share of felicity, till his Lordship going abroad, and remaining there some time, the consequences (to a most captivating young woman left without a protector) were such as to cause a separation on his return. Her Ladyship has left one child by the Earl, a daughter, aged fifteen.”

Lord Elmwood had so much feeling upon reading this, as to lay down the paper, and not take it up again for several minutes ; nor did he taste his chocolate during this interval, but leaned his elbow on the table and rested his head upon his hand. He then rose up—walked two or three times across the room—sat down again—took up the paper—and read as usual. Nor let the vociferous mourner, or the perpetual weeper, here complain of his want of sensibility—but let them remember that Lord Elmwood was a man—a man of understanding—of courage—of fortitude—above all, a man of the nicest feelings—and who shall say, but that at the time he leaned his head upon his hand, and rose to walk away the sense of what he felt, he might not feel as much as Lady Elmwood did in her last moments ?

Be this as it may, his susceptibility on the occasion was not suspected by any one. Yet he passed that day the same as usual ; the next day too, and the day after. On the morning of the fourth he sent for his steward to his study, and, after talking of other business, said to him—



"Is it true that Lady Elmwood is dead?"

"It is, my Lord."

His Lordship looked unusually grave, and at this reply fetched an involuntary sigh.

"Mr. Sandford, my Lord," continued the steward, "sent me word of the news, but left it to my own discretion whether I would make your Lordship acquainted with it or not. I let him know I declined."

"Where is Sandford?" asked Lord Elmwood.

"He was with my lady," replied the steward.

"When she died?" asked he.

"Yes, my Lord."

"I am glad of it. He will see that everything she desired is done. Sandford is a good man, and would be a friend to everybody."

"He is a very good man indeed, my Lord."

There was now a silence. Mr. Giffard, then bowing, said, "Has your Lordship any further commands?"

"Write to Sandford," said Lord Elmwood, hesitating as he spoke, "and tell him to have everything performed as she desired. And whoever she may have selected for the guardian of her child has my consent to act as such. Nor in one instance, where I myself am not concerned, shall I oppose her will." The tears rushed into his eyes as he said this, and caused them to start in the steward's; observing which, he sternly resumed—

"Do not suppose from this conversation that any of those resolutions I have long since taken are or will be changed. They are the same, and shall continue inflexible."

"I understand you, my Lord," replied Mr. Giffard; "and that your express orders to me, as well as to every other person, remain just the same as formerly—never to mention this subject to you again."

"They do, Sir."



"My Lord, I always obeyed you, and I hope I always shall."

"I hope so, too," he replied, in a threatening accent. "Write to Sandford," continued he, "to let him know my pleasure, and that is all you have to do."

The steward bowed and withdrew.

But before his letter reached Sandford, Sandford arrived in town; and Mr. Giffard related word for word what had passed between him and his Lord. Upon every occasion and upon every topic, except that of Lady Elmwood and her child, Sandford was just as free with Lord Elmwood as he had ever been; and as usual, after his interview with the steward, went into his apartment without any previous notice. Lord Elmwood shook him by the hand, as upon all other meetings; and yet, whether his fear suggested it or not, Sandford thought he appeared more cool and reserved with him than formerly.

During the whole day the slightest mention of Lady Elmwood, or of her child, was cautiously avoided; and not till the evening, after Sandford had risen to retire, and had wished Lord Elmwood good night, did he dare to mention the subject. He then, after taking leave and going to the door, turned back and said, "My Lord——"

It was easy to guess on what he was preparing to speak. His voice failed, the tears began to trickle down his cheeks, he took out his handkerchief, and could proceed no farther.

"I thought," said Lord Elmwood, angrily—"I thought I had given my orders upon the subject. Did not my steward write them to you?"

"He did, my Lord," said Sandford, humbly; "but I was set out before they arrived."

"Has he not *told* you my mind, then?" cried he, more angrily still.

"He has," replied Sandford; "but——"



"But what, Sir?" cried Lord Elmwood.

"Your Lordship," continued Sandford, "was mistaken in supposing that Lady Elmwood left a will; she left none."

"No will—no will at all?" returned he, surprised.

"No, my Lord," answered Sandford, "she wished everything to be as you willed."

"She left me all the trouble, then, you mean?"

"No great trouble, Sir; for there are but two persons whom she has left behind her to hope for your protection."

"And who are those two?" cried he, hastily.

"One, my Lord, I need not name; the other is Miss Woodley."

There was a delicacy and humility in the manner in which Sandford delivered this reply that Lord Elmwood could *not* resent, and he only returned—

"Miss Woodley. Is she yet living?"

"She is. I left her at the house I came from."

"Well, then," answered he, "you must see that my steward provides for those two persons. That care I leave to you. And should there be any complaints, on you they fall."

Sandford bowed, and was going.

"And now," resumed Lord Elmwood, in a more stern voice, "let me never hear again on this subject. You have here the power to act in regard to the persons you have mentioned; and upon you their situation, the care, the whole management of them depends. But be sure you never let them be named before me from this moment."

"Then," said Sandford, "as this must be the last time they are mentioned, I must now take the opportunity to disburden my mind of a charge——"

"What charge?" cried Lord Elmwood, morosely interrupting him.

"Though Lady Elmwood, my Lord, left no will behind her, she left a request."



"A request!" said he, starting. "If it is for me to see her daughter, I tell you now, before you ask, that I will not grant it. For by Heaven," and he spoke and looked most solemnly, "though I have no resentment against the innocent child, and wish her happy, yet I will never see her. Never, for her mother's sake, suffer my heart again to be softened by an object I might dote upon. Therefore, Sir, if that is the request, it is already answered. My will is fixed."

"The request, my Lord," replied Sandford, and he took out a pocket-book, from whence he drew several papers, "is contained in this letter; nor do I rightly know what its contents are." And he held it timorously out to him.

"Is it Lady Elmwood's writing?" asked Lord Elmwood, extremely discomposed.

"It is, my Lord. She wrote it a few days before she died, and enjoined me to deliver it to you with my own hands."

"I refuse to read it," cried he, putting it from him, and trembling while he did so.

"She desired me," said Sandford, still presenting the letter, "to conjure you to read it *for her father's sake*."

Lord Elmwood took it instantly. But as soon as it was in his hand he seemed distressed to know what he should do with it, in what place to go and read it, or how to fortify himself against its contents. He appeared ashamed, too, that he had been so far prevailed upon, and said, by way of excuse—

"For Mr. Milner's sake I would do much—nay, anything but that to which I have just now sworn never to consent. For his sake I have borne a great deal—for his sake alone his daughter died my wife. You know no other motive than respect for him prevented my divorce. Pray," and he hesitated, "was she buried by him?"



"No, my Lord, she expressed no such desire; and as that was the case, I did not think it necessary to carry the corpse so far."

At the word corpse Lord Elmwood shrunk, and looked shocked beyond measure, but, recovering himself said, "I am sorry for it; for he loved *her* sincerely, if she did not love him; and I wish they had been buried together."

"It is not, then, too late," said Sandford, and was going on, but the other interrupted him.

"No, no; we will have no disturbing of the dead."

"Read her letter, then," said Sandford, "and bid her rest in peace."

"If it is in my power," returned he, "to grant what she asks, I will; but if her demand is what I apprehend, I cannot—I will not—bid her rest by complying. You know my resolution—my disposition, and take care how you provoke me. You may do an injury to the very person you are seeking to befriend. The very maintenance I mean to allow her daughter I can withdraw."

Poor Sandford, all alarmed at this menace, replied, with energy, "My Lord, unless you begin the subject I never shall presume to mention it again."

"I take you at your word, and in consequence of that, but of that alone, we are friends. Good night, Sir."

Sandford bowed with humility, and they went to their separate bed-chambers.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER Lord Elmwood had retired into his chamber, it was some time before he read the letter Sandford had given him. He first walked backwards and forwards in the room; he then began to take off some part of his dress; but he did it slowly. At length he dismissed his valet, and, sitting down, took the letter from his pocket. He looked at the seal, but not at the direction; for he seemed to dread seeing Lady Elmwood's handwriting. He then laid it on the table, and began again to undress. He did not proceed, but, taking up the letter quickly, with a kind of effort in making the resolution, broke it open. These were its contents:—

“MY LORD,—Who writes this letter I well know—I well know to whom it is addressed—I feel with the most powerful force both our situations. Nor should I dare to offer you even this humble petition, but that at the time you receive it, there will be no such person as I in existence.

“For myself, then, all concern will be over—but there is a care that pursues me to the grave, and threatens my want of repose even there.

“I leave a child—I will not call her mine, that has undone her—I will not call her yours, that will be of no avail—I present her before you as the grand-daughter of Mr. Milner. Oh! do not refuse an asylum even in your



own house, to the destitute offspring of your friend ; the last and only remaining branch of his family.

“Receive her into your household, be her condition there ever so abject. I cannot write distinctly what I would—my senses are not impaired, but the powers of expression are. The complaint of the unfortunate child in the scriptures (a lesson I have studied) has made this wish cling so fast to my heart, that, without the distant hope of its being fulfilled, death would have more terrors than my weak mind could support.

“*‘I will go to my father ; how many servants live in my father’s house, and are fed with plenty, while I starve in a foreign land.’*

“I do not ask a parent’s rejoicing at her approach. I do not even ask her father to behold her ; but let her live under his protection. For her grandfather’s sake do not refuse this—to the child of his child, whom he entrusted to your care, do not refuse it.

“Be her host ; I remit the tie of being her parent. Never see her ; but let her sometimes live under the same roof with you.

“It is Miss Milner, your ward, to whom you never refused a request, who supplicates you—not now for your nephew, Rushbrook, but for one so much more dear, that a denial—she dares not suffer her thoughts to glance that way—she will hope—and in that hope, bids you farewell, with all the love she ever bore you.

“Farewell, Dorriforth. Farewell, Lord Elmwood—and before you throw this letter from you with contempt or anger, cast your imagination into the grave where I am lying. Reflect upon all the days of my past life—the anxious moments I have known, and what has been their end. Behold *me*, also—in my altered face there is no anxiety—no joy or sorrow—all is over. My whole frame



is motionless—my heart beats no more. Look at my horrid habitation, too,—and ask yourself, whether I am an object of resentment?”

While Lord Elmwood read this letter, it trembled in his hand. He once or twice wiped the tears from his eyes as he read, and once laid the letter down for a few minutes. At its conclusion, the tears flowed fast down his face ; but he seemed both ashamed and angry that they did so, and was going to throw the paper upon the fire. He, however, suddenly checked his hand ; and, putting it hastily into his pocket, went to bed.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE next morning when Lord Elmwood and Sandford met at breakfast, the latter was pale with fear for the success of Lady Elmwood's letter. The Earl was pale, too; but there was besides upon his face something which evidently marked he was displeased. Sandford observed it, and was all humbleness, both in his words and looks, in order to soften him.

As soon as the breakfast was removed, Lord Elmwood drew the letter from his pocket, and holding it towards Sandford, said—

"That may be of more value to you than it is to me, therefore I give it you."

Sandford called up a look of surprise, as if he did not know the letter again.

"'Tis Lady Elmwood's letter," said Lord Elmwood, "and I return it to you for two reasons."

Sandford took it, and, putting it up, asked fearfully, "What those two reasons were?"

"First," said he, "because I think it is a relic you may like to preserve. My second reason is, that you may shew it to her daughter, and let her know why, and on what conditions, I grant her mother's request."

"You *do* then grant it?" cried Sandford, joyfully; "I thank you—you are kind—you are considerate."



"Be not hasty in your gratitude ; you may have cause to recall it."

"I know what you have said," replied Sandford ; "you have said you grant Lady Elmwood's request—you cannot recall these words, nor I my gratitude."

"Do you know what her request is?" returned he.

"Not exactly, my Lord. I told you before I did not ; but it is no doubt something in favour of her child."

"I think not," he replied ; "such as it is, however, I grant it ; but, in the strictest sense of the word, no farther ; and one neglect of my commands releases me from this promise totally."

"We will take care, Sir, not to disobey them."

"Then listen to what they are, for to you I give the charge of delivering them again. Lady Elmwood has petitioned me in the name of her father (a name I reverence), to give his grandchild the sanction of my protection. In the literal sense, to suffer that she may reside at one of my seats ; dispensing at the same time with my ever seeing her."

"And you will comply?"

"I will,—till she encroaches on this concession, and dares to hope for a greater. I will, while she avoids my sight, or the giving me any remembrance of her. But if, whether by design or by accident, I ever see or hear from her, that moment my compliance with her mother's supplication ceases, and I abandon her once more."

Sandford sighed. Lord Elmwood continued—

"I am glad her request stopped where it did. I would rather comply with her desires than not : and I rejoice they are such as I can grant with ease and honour to myself. I am seldom now at Elmwood Castle—let her daughter go there ; the few weeks or months I am down in the summer, she may easily, in that extensive house, avoid me. While



she does, she lives in security ; when she does not—you know my resolution.”

Sandford bowed : the Earl resumed—

“Nor can it be a hardship to obey this command—she cannot lament the separation from a parent whom she never knew.” Sandford was going eagerly to prove the error of that assertion, but he prevented him by saying—  
“In a word, without further argument, if she obeys me in this, I will provide for her as my daughter during my life, and leave her a fortune at my death ; but if she dares ——”

Sandford interrupted the menace prepared for utterance, saying—

“And you still mean, I suppose, to make Mr. Rushbrook your heir?”

“Have you not heard me say so? And do you imagine I have changed my determination? I am not given to alter my resolutions, Mr. Sandford ; and I thought you knew I was not. Besides, will not my title be extinct, whoever I make my heir? Could anything but a son have preserved my title?”

“Then it is yet possible——”

“By marrying again, you mean? No—no—I have had enough of marriage—and Henry Rushbrook I shall leave my heir. Therefore, Sir——”

“My Lord, I do not presume——”

“Do not, Sandford, and we may still be good friends. But I am not to be controlled as formerly ; my temper is changed of late ; changed to what it was originally, till your religions precepts reformed it. You may remember, how troublesome it was to conquer my stubborn disposition in my youth ; *then*, indeed, you *did* ; but in my more advanced age, you will find the task too difficult.”

Sandford again repeated, “He should not presume,——”



To which Lord Elmwood again made answer—"Do not, Sandford;" and added, "for I have a sincere regard for you, and should be loath, at these years, to quarrel with you seriously."

Sandford turned away his head to conceal his feelings.

"Nay, if we do quarrel," resumed Lord Elmwood, "you know it must be your own fault; and as this is a theme the most likely of any, nay, the only one on which we can have a difference (such as we cannot forgive) take care never from this day to renew it. Indeed, that of itself would be an offence I could not pardon. I have been clear and explicit in all I have said; there can be no fear of mistaking my meaning; therefore, all future explanation is unnecessary; nor will I permit a word, or a hint on the subject from any one, without shewing my resentment even to the hour of my death." He was going out of the room.

"But before we bid adieu to the subject for ever, my Lord—there was another person whom I named to you——"

"Do you mean Miss Woodley? Oh, by all means let her live at Elmwood House, too. On consideration, I have no objection to see Miss Woodley at any time—I shall be glad to see her. Do not let *her* be frightened at me—to her I shall be the same that I have always been."

"She is a good woman, my Lord," cried Sandford, delighted.

"You need not tell me that, Mr. Sandford; I know her worth." And he left the room.

Sandford, to relieve Miss Woodley and her lovely charge from the suspense in which he had left them, prepared to set off for their habitation, and meant himself to conduct them from thence to Elmwood Castle, and appoint some



retired part of it for Lady Matilda, against the annual visit which her father should pay there. To confirm this caution, before he left London, Giffard, the steward, took an opportunity to wait upon him, and let him know, that his Lord had acquainted him with the consent he had given for his daughter to be admitted at Elmwood Castle, and upon what restrictions: that he had further uttered the severest threats should these restrictions ever be infringed.

Sandford thanked Giffard for his friendly information. It served him as a second warning of the circumspection that was necessary; and having taken leave of his friend and patron, under the pretence that "he could not live in the smoke of London," he set out for the north.

It is unnecessary to say with what joy Sandford was received by Miss Woodley, and the hapless daughter of Lady Elmwood, even before he told his errand. They both loved him sincerely; more especially Lady Matilda, whose forlorn state, and innocent sufferings, had ever excited his compassion, and caused him to treat her with affection, tenderness, and respect. She knew, too, how much he had been her mother's friend; for that she also loved him; and for his being honoured with the friendship of her father, she looked up to him with reverence. For Matilda, with an excellent understanding, a sedateness above her years, and having been early accustomed to the private converse between Lady Elmwood and Miss Woodley, was perfectly acquainted with the whole fatal history of her mother; and was, by her, taught the esteem and admiration of her father's virtues which they so justly merited.

Notwithstanding the joy of Mr. Sandford's presence, once more to cheer their solitary dwelling; no sooner were the first kind greetings over, than the dread of what he might have to inform them of, possessed poor Matilda and Miss



Woodley so powerfully, that all their gladness was changed into affright. Their apprehension was far more forcible than their curiosity; they dared not ask a question, and even began to wish he would continue silent upon the subject to which they feared to listen. For near two hours he was so. At length, after a short interval from speaking, during which they waited with anxiety for what he might next say, he turned to Lady Matilda, and said—

“You don’t ask for your father, my dear.”

“I did not know it was proper;” she replied, timidly.

“It is always proper,” answered Sandford, “for *you* to think of him, though he should never think of you.”

She burst into tears, and said that she “*did* think of him, but she felt an apprehension of mentioning his name.” And she wept bitterly while she spoke.

“Do not think I reproved you,” said Sandford; “I only told you what was right.”

“Nay,” said Miss Woodley, “she does not weep for that—she fears her father has not complied with her mother’s request. Perhaps—not even read her letter.”

“Yes, he *has* read it,” returned Sandford.

“Oh, heavens!” exclaimed Matilda, clasping her hands together, and the tears falling still faster.

“Do not be so much alarmed, my dear,” said Miss Woodley; “you know we are prepared for the worst; and you know you promised your mother, whatever your fate should be, to submit with patience.”

“Yes,” replied Matilda, “and I am prepared for everything, but my father’s refusal to my dear mother.”

“Your father has not refused your mother’s request,” replied Sandford.

She was leaping from her seat in ecstasy.



"But," continued he, "do you know what her request was?"

"Not entirely," replied Matilda, "and since it is granted, I am careless. But she told me her letter concerned none but me."

To explain perfectly to Matilda, Lady Elmwood's letter, and that she might perfectly understand upon what terms she was admitted into Elmwood Castle, Sandford now read the letter to her; and repeated, as nearly as he could remember, the whole of the conversation that passed between Lord Elmwood and himself; not even sparing, through an erroneous delicacy, any of those threats her father had denounced, should she dare to transgress the limits he prescribed—nor did he try to soften, in one instance, a word he uttered. She listened sometimes with tears, sometimes with hope, but always with awe, and with terror, to every sentence in which her father was concerned. Once she called him cruel—then exclaimed, "he was kind;" but at the end of Sandford's intelligence, concluded "that she was happy and grateful for the boon bestowed." Even her mother had not a more exalted idea of Lord Elmwood's worth than his daughter had formed; and this little bounty just obtained would not have been greater in her mother's estimation, than it was now in hers. Miss Woodley, too, smiled at the prospect before her—she esteemed Lord Elmwood beyond any mortal living—she was proud to hear what he had said in her praise, and overjoyed at the expectation of being once again in his company; painting at the same time a thousand bright hopes, from watching every emotion of his soul, and catching every proper occasion to excite or increase his paternal sentiments. Yet she had the prudence to conceal those vague hopes from his child, lest a disappointment might prove fatal; and assuming a behaviour neither too much elated or depressed,



she advised that they should hope for the best, but yet, as usual, expect and prepare for the worst. After taking measures for quitting their melancholy abode, within the fortnight, they all departed for Elmwood Castle—Matilda, Miss Woodley, and even Sandford, first visiting Lady Elmwood's grave, and bedewing it with their tears.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

IT was on a dark evening in the month of March, that Lady Matilda, accompanied by Sandford and Miss Woodley, arrived at Elmwood Castle, the magnificent seat of her father. Sandford chose the evening, rather to steal into the house privately, than by any appearance of parade to suffer Lord Elmwood to be reminded of their arrival by the public prints, or by any other accident. Nor would he give the neighbours or servants reason to suppose the daughter of their Lord was admitted into his house, in any other situation than that in which she really was permitted to be there.

As the porter opened the gates of the avenue to the carriage that brought them, Matilda felt an awful and yet gladsome sensation, which no terms can describe. As she entered the door of the mansion this sensation increased, and as she passed along the spacious hall, the splendid staircase, and many stately apartments, wonder, with a crowd of the tenderest, yet most afflicting sentiments, rushed to her heart. She gazed with astonishment!—she reflected with still more.

“And is *my father* the master of this house?” she cried —“and was my mother once the mistress of this castle?” Here tears relieved her from a part of that burden, which was before insupportable.

“Yes,” replied Sandford, “and you are the mistress of it now till your father arrives.”



“Good Heaven!” exclaimed she, “and will he ever arrive? and shall I live to sleep under the same roof with my father?”

“My dear,” replied Miss Woodley, “have not you been told so?”

“Yes,” said she, “but though I heard it with extreme pleasure, yet the expectation never so forcibly affected me as at this moment. I now feel, as the reality approaches, that to be admitted here is kindness enough: I do not ask for more: I am now convinced, from what this trial makes me feel, that to see my father would occasion emotions I could not perhaps survive.”

The next morning gave to Matilda more objects of admiration and wonder, as she walked over the extensive gardens, groves, and other pleasure grounds belonging to the house. She, who had never been beyond the dreary, ruinous places which her deceased mother had made her residence, was naturally struck with amazement and delight at the grandeur of a seat, which travellers came for miles to see, nor thought their time misspent.

There was one object, however, among all she saw, which attracted her attention above the rest, and she would stand for hours to look at it. This was a whole length portrait of Lord Elmwood, esteemed a very capital picture, and a perfect likeness. To this picture she would sigh and weep; though, when it was first pointed out to her, she shrunk back with fear, and it was some time before she dared venture to cast her eyes completely upon it. In the features of her father she was proud to discern the exact mould in which her own appeared to have been cast; yet Matilda's person was so extremely like what her mother's once had been, that at the first glance she appeared to bear a still greater resemblance to her than to her father—but her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's,



softened by the delicacy of her sex, the extreme tenderness of her heart, and the melancholy of her situation.

She was now in her seventeenth year: of the same age, within a year and a few months, as her mother, when she first became the ward of Dorriforth. She was just three years old when her father went abroad, and remembered something of bidding him farewell; but more of taking cherries from his hand, as he pulled them from the tree to give to her.

Educated in the school of adversity, and inured to retirement from her infancy, she had acquired a taste for all those amusements which a recluse life affords. She was fond of walking and riding—was accomplished in the arts of music and drawing, by the most careful instructions of her mother—and as a scholar, she excelled most of her sex, from the pains which Sandford had taken with that part of her education, and the superior abilities he possessed for the task.

In devoting certain hours of the day to study with him, others to music, riding, and such harmless recreations, Matilda's time never appeared tedious at Elmwood Castle, although she received and paid no one visit; for it was soon divulged in the neighbourhood upon what stipulation she resided at her father's, and studiously intimated, that the most prudent and friendly behaviour of her true friends would be, to take no notice whatever that she lived among them; and as Lord Elmwood's will was a law all around, such was the consequence of that will, known, or merely supposed.

Neither did Miss Woodley regret the want of visitors, but found herself far more satisfied in her present situation than her most sanguine hopes could have formed. She had a companion whom she loved with an equal fondness with which she had loved her deceased mother; and frequently,



in this charming habitation, where she had so often beheld Lady Elmwood, her imagination represented Matilda as her friend risen from the grave, in her former youth, health, and exquisite beauty.

In peace, in content, though not in happiness, the days and weeks passed away till about the middle of August, when preparations began to be made for the arrival of Lord Elmwood. The week in which he was to come was at length fixed, and some part of his retinue had arrived before him. When this was told Matilda, she started, and looked just as her mother at her age had often done, when, in spite of her love, she was conscious that she had offended him, and was terrified at his approach. Sandford, observing this involuntary emotion, put out his hand, and, taking hers, shook it kindly, and bade her (but it was not in a cheering tone) "not be afraid." This gave her no confidence; and she began, before her father's arrival, to seclude herself in the apartments allotted for her during the time of his stay; and, in the timorous expectation of his coming, her appetite declined and she lost all her colour. Even Miss Woodley, whose spirits had been for some time elated with the hopes she had formed from his residence at the castle, on drawing near to the test, found those hopes vanished; and though she endeavoured to conceal it, she was full of apprehensions. Sandford had certainly fewer fears than either; yet, upon the eve of the day on which his patron was to arrive, he was evidently cast down.

Lady Matilda once asked him, "Are you certain, Mr. Sandford, you made no mistake in respect to what Lord Elmwood said when he granted my mother's request? Are you sure he *did* grant it? Was there nothing equivocal on which he may ground his displeasure should he be told that I am here? Oh, do not let me hazard being once again turned out of his house! Oh, save me from provoking him



perhaps to execrate me!" And here she clasped her hands together with the most fervent petition, in the dread of what might happen.

"If you doubt my words or my senses," said Sandford, "call Giffard, who is just arrived, and let him inform you. The same words were repeated to him as to me."

Though from her reason Matilda could not doubt of any mistake from Mr. Sandford, yet her fears suggested a thousand scruples; and this reference to the steward she received with the utmost satisfaction, though she did not think it necessary to apply to him, as it perfectly convinced her of the folly of the suspicions she had entertained.

"And yet, Mr. Sandford," said she, "if it is so, why are you less cheerful than you were? I cannot help thinking but it must be the expected arrival of Lord Elmwood which has occasioned this change."

"I don't know," replied Sandford, carelessly; "but I believe I am grown afraid of your father. His temper is a good deal altered from what it once was. He raises his voice and uses harsh expressions upon the least provocation; his eyes flash lightning and his face is distorted with anger upon the slightest motives; he turns away his old servants at a moment's warning, and no concession can make their peace. In a word, I am more at my ease when I am away from him; and I verily believe," added he with a smile, but with a tear at the same time, "I really believe I am more afraid of *him* in my age than he was of *me* when he was a boy."

Miss Woodley was present. She and Matilda looked at one another; and each of them saw the other turn pale at this description.

The day at length came on which Lord Elmwood was expected to dinner. It would have been a high gratification to his daughter to have gone to the topmost window of the



house and have only beheld his carriage enter the avenue; but it was a gratification which her fears, her tremor, her extreme sensibility would not permit her to enjoy.

Miss Woodley and she sat down that day to dinner in their retired apartments, which were detached from the other part of the house by a gallery; and of the door leading to the gallery they had a key, to impede any one from passing that way without first ringing a bell, to answer which was the sole employment of a servant who was placed there during the Earl's residence, lest by any accident he might chance to come near that unfrequented part of the house, on which occasion the man was to give immediate notice to his lady, so that she might avoid his presence by retiring to an inner room.

Matilda and Miss Woodley sat down to dinner, but did not dine. Sandford dined as usual with Lord Elmwood. When tea was brought, Miss Woodley asked the servant who attended if he had seen his Lord. The man answered, "Yes, Madam; and he looks vastly well." Matilda wept with joy to hear it.

About nine in the evening Sandford rang at the bell and was admitted. Never had he been so welcome. Matilda hung upon him, as if his recent interview with her father had endeared him to her more than ever; and, staring anxiously in his face, seemed to inquire of him something about Lord Elmwood, and something that should not alarm her.

"Well, how do you find yourself?" said he to her.

"How are you, Mr. Sandford?" she returned, with a sigh.

"Oh, very well," replied he.

"Is my Lord in a good temper?" asked Miss Woodley.

"Yes; very well," replied Sandford, with indifference.

"Did he seem glad to see you?" asked Matilda.



"He shook me by the hand," replied Sandford.

"That was a sign he was glad to see you, was it not?" said Matilda.

"Yes; but he could not do less."

"Nor more," replied she.

"He looks very well, our servant tells us," said Miss Woodley.

"Extremely well, indeed," answered Sandford; "and, to tell the truth, I never saw him in better spirits."

"That is well," said Matilda, and sighed a weight of fears from her heart.

"Where is he now, Mr. Sandford?"

"Gone to take a walk about the grounds; and I stole here in the meantime."

"What was your conversation during dinner?" asked Miss Woodley.

"Horses, hay, farming, and politics."

"Won't you sup with him?"

"I shall see him again before I go to bed."

"And again to-morrow?" cried Matilda. "What happiness!"

"He has visitors to-morrow," said Sandford, "coming for a week or two."

"Thank Heaven," said Miss Woodley; "he will then be diverted from thinking of us."

"Do you know," returned Sandford, "it is my firm opinion that his thinking of ye at present is the cause of his good spirits."

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Matilda, lifting up her hands with rapture.

"Nay, do not mistake me," said Sandford; "I would not have you build a foundation for joy upon this surmise; for if he is in spirits that you are in this house—so near him—positively under his protection, yet he will not allow himself



to think it is the cause of his content; and the sentiments he has adopted, and which are now become natural to him, will remain the same as ever; nay, perhaps with greater force should he suspect his weakness, as he calls it, acting in opposition to them.

"If he does but think of me with tenderness," cried Matilda, "I am recompensed."

"And what recompense would his kind thoughts be to you," said Sandford, "were he to turn you out to beggary?"

"A great deal—a great deal," she replied.

"But how are you to know he has these kind thoughts, if he gives you no proof of them?"

"No, Mr. Sandford; but *supposing* we could know them without proof?"

"But as that is impossible," answered he, "I shall suppose, till proof appears, that I have been mistaken in my conjectures."

Matilda looked deeply concerned that the argument should conclude in her disappointment; for to have believed herself thought of with tenderness by her father would have alone constituted her happiness.

When the servant came up with something by way of supper, he told Mr. Sandford that his Lord was returned from his walk and had inquired for him. Sandford immediately bade his companions good night and left them.

"How strange is this!" cried Matilda, when Miss Woodley and she were alone; "my father within a few rooms of me, and yet I am debarred from seeing him! Only by walking a few paces I could be at his feet, and perhaps receive his blessing!"

"You make me shudder," cried Miss Woodley; "but some spirits less timid than mine might perhaps advise you to the experiment."

"Not for worlds!" returned Matilda. "No counsel could



tempt me to such temerity. And yet to entertain the thought that it is possible I could do this, is a source of infinite comfort."

This conversation lasted till bedtime, and later; for they sat up beyond their usual hour to indulge it.

Miss Woodley slept little, but Matilda less. She awaked repeatedly during the night, and every time sighed to herself, "I sleep in the same house with my father! Blessed spirit of my mother, look down and rejoice."



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE next day the whole castle appeared to Lady Matilda (though she was in some degree retired from it) all tumult and bustle, as was usually the case while Lord Elmwood was there. She saw from her windows the servants running across the yards and park; horses and carriages driving with fury; all the suite of a nobleman; and it sometimes elated, at other times depressed her.

These impressions, however, and others of fear and anxiety which her father's arrival had excited, by degrees wore off; and, after some little time, she was in the same tranquil state that she enjoyed before he came.

He had visitors, who passed a week or two with him; he paid visits himself for several days; and thus the time stole away till it was about four weeks from the time that he had arrived, in which long period Sandford, with all his penetration, could never clearly discover whether he had once called to mind that his daughter was living in the same house. He had not once named her (that was not extraordinary), consequently no one dared name her to him; but he had not even mentioned Miss Woodley, of whom he had so lately spoken in the kindest terms, and had said he should take pleasure in seeing her again. From these contradictions in Lord Elmwood's behaviour in respect to her, it was Miss Woodley's plan neither to throw herself in his way nor avoid him. She therefore frequently walked about



the house while he was in it, not, indeed, entirely without restraint, but at least with the show of liberty. This freedom, indulged for some time without peril, became at last less cautious; and, as no ill consequences had arisen from its practice, her scruples gradually ceased.

One morning, however, as she was crossing the large hall, thoughtless of danger, a footstep at a distance alarmed her almost without knowing why. She stopped for a moment, thinking to return; the steps approached quicker, and before she could retreat, she beheld Lord Elmwood at the other end of the hall, and perceived that he saw her. It was too late to hesitate what was to be done; she could not go back, and had not courage to go on; she, therefore, stood still.

Disconcerted, and much affected at his sight (their former intimacy coming to her mind with the many years, and many sad occurrences passed, since she last saw him), all her intentions, all her meditated schemes how to conduct herself on such an occasion, gave way to a sudden shock—and to make the meeting yet more distressing, her very fright, she knew, would serve to recall more powerfully to his mind the subject she most wished him to forget. The steward was with him, and as they came up close by her side, Giffard observing him look at her earnestly, said softly, but so that she heard him—

“My Lord, it is Miss Woodley.”

Lord Elmwood took off his hat instantly; and, with an apparent friendly warmth, laying hold of her hand, he said—

“Indeed, Miss Woodley, I did not know you. I am very glad to see you;” and while he spoke, shook her hand with a cordiality which her tender heart could not bear—and never did she feel so hard a struggle as to restrain her tears.



But the thought of Matilda's fate—the idea of awakening in his mind a sentiment that might irritate him against his child, wrought more forcibly than every other effort; and though she could not reply distinctly, she replied without weeping.

Whether he saw her embarrassment, and wished to release her from it, or was in haste to conceal his own, he left her almost instantly; but not till he had intreated she would dine that very day with him and Mr. Sandford, who were to dine without other company. She courtesied assent, and flew to tell Matilda what had occurred.

After listening with anxiety and with joy to all she told, Matilda laid hold of that hand which she said Lord Elmwood had held, and pressed it to her lips with love and reverence.

When Miss Woodley made her appearance at dinner, Sandford (who had not seen her since the invitation, and did not know of it) looked amazed!—on which Lord Elmwood said—

“Do you know, Sandford, I met Miss Woodley this morning, and had it not been for Giffard, I should have passed her without knowing her. But Miss Woodley, if I am not so much altered but that you knew me, I take it unkind you did not speak first.”

She was unable to speak even now: he saw it, and changed the conversation; when Sandford eagerly joined in fresh discourse, which relieved him from the pain of the former.

As they advanced in their dinner, the embarrassment of Miss Woodley and of Mr. Sandford diminished. Lord Elmwood, in his turn, became not embarrassed, but absent and melancholy. He now and then sighed heavily—and called for wine much oftener than he was accustomed.



When Miss Woodley took her leave, he invited her to dine with him and Sandford whenever it was convenient to her ;—he said, besides, many things of the same kind, and all with the utmost civility, yet not with that warmth with which he had spoken in the morning—into *that* he had been surprised—his coolness was the effect of reflection.

When she came to Lady Matilda, and Sandford had joined them, they talked and deliberated on what had passed.

“You acknowledge, Mr. Sandford,” said Miss Woodley, “that you think my presence affected Lord Elmwood, so as to make him much more thoughtful than usual. If you imagine these thoughts were upon Lady Elmwood, I will never intrude again ; but if you suppose that I made him think upon his daughter, I cannot go too often.”

“I don’t see how he can divide those two objects in his mind,” replied Sandford, “therefore you must e’en visit him on, and take your chance, what reflections you may cause—but, be they what they will, time will steal away from you that power of affecting him.”

She concurred in the opinion, and occasionally she walked into Lord Elmwood’s apartments, dined, or took her coffee with him, as the accident suited ; and observed, according to Sandford’s prediction, that time wore off the impression her visits first made.

Lord Elmwood now became just the same before her as before others. She easily discerned, too, through all that politeness which he assumed—that he was no longer the considerate, the forbearing character he formerly was ; but haughty, impatient, imperious, and more than ever *implacable*.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHEN Lord Elmwood had been at his country-seat about six weeks, Mr. Rushbrook, his nephew, and his adopted child—that friendless boy whom Lady Elmwood first introduced into his uncle’s house, and by her kindness preserved there—arrived from his travels, and was received by his uncle with all the marks of affection due to the man he thought worthy to be his heir. Rushbrook had been a beautiful boy, and was now an extremely handsome young man. He had made unusual progress in his studies ; had completed the tour of Italy and Germany, and returned home with the air and address of a perfect man of fashion. There was, besides, an elegance and persuasion in his manner almost irresistible. Yet with all these accomplishments, when he was introduced to Sandford, and put forth his hand to take his, Sandford, with evident reluctance, gave it to him ; and when Lord Elmwood asked him, in the young man’s presence, “ If he did not think his nephew greatly improved ? ” he looked at him from head to foot, and muttered—“ He could not say he observed it,”

The colour heightened in Mr. Rushbrook’s face upon the occasion ; but he was too well-bred not to be in perfect good-humour.

Sandford saw this young man treated, in the house of Lord Elmwood, with the same respect and attention as if



he had been his son ; and it was but probable that the old priest would make a comparison between the situation of him and of Lady Matilda Elmwood.

Before her, it was Sandford's meaning to have concealed his thoughts upon the subject, and never to have mentioned it but with composure : that was, however, impossible—unused to hide his feelings, at the name of Rushbrook his countenance would always change, and a sarcastic sneer, sometimes a frown of resentment, would force its way in spite of his resolution.

Miss Woodley, too, with all her boundless charity and good-will, was, upon this occasion, induced to limit them ; and they did not extend so far as to reach poor Rushbrook. She even professed not to—and in *reality*, did not—think him handsome or engaging in his manners ; she thought his gaiety frivolousness, his complaisance, affectation, and his good-humour, impertinence.

It was impossible to conceal these unfavourable sentiments entirely from Matilda ; for when the subject arose, as it frequently did, Miss Woodley's undisguised heart, and Sandford's undisguised countenance, told them instantly. Matilda had the understanding to imagine that she was, perhaps, the object who had thus deformed Mr. Rushbrook in the estimation of her friends, and (though he was a stranger to her, and one who had caused her many a jealous heart-ache) frequently she would speak in his vindication.

"You are very good," said Sandford, one day to her : "you like him, because you know your father loves him."

This was a hard sentence for the daughter of Lord Elmwood to hear, to whom her father's love would have been more precious than any other blessing ; she, however, checked the assault of envy, and kindly replied—

"My mother loved him, too, Mr. Sandford."



"Yes," answered Sandford, "he has been a *grateful* man to your poor mother. She did not suppose when she took him into the house—when she entreated your father to take him—and through her caresses and officious praises of him, first gave him that power which he now possesses over his uncle ; she little foresaw, at that time, his ingratitude, and its effects."

"Very true," said Miss Woodley, with a heavy sigh.

"What ingratitude?" asked Matilda, "do you suppose Mr. Rushbrook is the cause that my father will not see me? Oh, do not pay Lord Elmwood's motive so ill a compliment."

"I do not say that he is the absolute cause," returned Sandford; "but if a parent's heart is void, I would have it remain so, till its lawful owner is replaced. Usurpers I detest."

"No one can take Lord Elmwood's heart by force," replied his daughter, "it must, I believe, be a free gift to the possessor: and as such, whoever has it, has a right to it."

In this manner she would plead the young man's excuse—perhaps but to hear what could be said in his disfavour, for secretly his name was bitter to her—and once she exclaimed in vexation, on Sandford's saying Lord Elmwood and Mr. Rushbrook were gone out shooting together—

"All that pleasure is eclipsed which I used to take in listening to the report of my father's gun, for I cannot now distinguish his from his parasite's."

Sandford (much as he disliked Rushbrook) for this expression which comprised her father in the reflection, turned to Matilda in extreme anger—but as he saw the colour rise into her face for what, in the strong feelings of her heart, had escaped her lips, he did not say a word—and



by her tears that followed, he rejoiced to see how much she reproved *herself*.

Miss Woodley, vexed to the heart, and provoked every time she saw Lord Elmwood and Rushbrook together, and noticed the familiar terms on which this young man lived with his benefactor, now made her visits to him very seldom.

If Lord Elmwood observed this, he did not appear to observe it ; and though he received her politely when she did pay him a visit, it was always very coldly ; nor did she suppose if she never went, he would ever ask for her. For his daughter's sake, however, she thought it right sometimes to shew herself before him ; for she knew it must be impossible that, with all his apparent indifference, he could ever see *her* without thinking for a moment of his child ; and what one fortunate thought might sometime bring about, was an object much too serious for her to overlook.

She, therefore, after remaining confined to her own suite of rooms nearly three weeks (excepting those anxious walks she and Matilda stole, while Lord Elmwood dined, or before he rose in the morning) went one forenoon into his apartments, where, as usual, she found him with Mr. Sandford and Mr. Rushbrook.

After she had sat about half-an-hour, conversing with them all, though but very little with the latter, Lord Elmwood was called out of the room upon some business ; presently after, Sandford ; and now, by no means pleased with the companion with whom she was left, she rose, and was also retiring, when Rushbrook fixed his speaking eyes upon her, and cried—

“Miss Woodley, will you pardon me what I am going to say?”

“Certainly, Sir—you can, I am sure, say nothing but what I must forgive.” But she made this reply with a distance



and a reserve, very unlike the usual manners of Miss Woodley.

He looked at her earnestly and cried, "Ah! Miss Woodley, you don't behave so kindly to me as you used to do!"

"I do not understand you, Sir,"—she replied very gravely; "times are changed, Mr. Rushbrook, since you were last here—you were then but a child."

"Yet I love all those persons now that I loved then," replied he; "and so I shall for ever."

"But you mistake, Mr. Rushbrook, I was not even then so very much the object of your affections—there were other ladies you loved better. Perhaps you don't remember Lady Elmwood?"

"Do *not* I," cried he. "Oh!" (clasping his hands and lifting up his eyes to heaven) "shall I ever forget her?"

That moment Lord Elmwood opened the door; the conversation of course that moment ended; but confusion, at the sudden surprise, was on the face of both parties: he saw it, and looked at each of them by turns, with a sternness that made poor Miss Woodley ready to faint; while Rushbrook, with the most natural and happy laugh that ever was affected, cried, "No, don't tell my Lord, pray, Miss Woodley." She was more confused than before, and Lord Elmwood turning to him, asked what the subject was. By this time he had invented one, and, continuing his laugh, said, "Miss Woodley, my Lord, will to this day protest that she saw my apparition when I was a boy; and she says it is a sign I shall die young, and is really much affected at it."

Lord Elmwood turned away before this ridiculous speech was concluded; yet so well had it been acted, that he did not for an instant doubt its truth.

Miss Woodley felt herself greatly relieved; and yet so little is it in the power of those we dislike to do anything to



please us, that from this very circumstance she formed a more unfavourable opinion of Mr. Rushbrook than she had done before. She saw in this little incident the art of dissimulation, cunning, and duplicity in its most glaring shape; and detested the method by which they had each escaped Lord Elmwood's suspicion, and perhaps anger, the more, because it was so dexterously managed.

Lady Matilda and Sandford were both in their turns informed of this trait in Mr. Rushbrook's character; and although Miss Woodley had the best of dispositions, and upon every occasion spoke the strictest truth, yet in relating this occurrence, she did not speak *all* the truth; for every circumstance that would have told to the young man's advantage *literally* had slipped her memory.

The twenty-ninth of October arrived, on which a dinner, a ball, and supper, was given by Lord Elmwood to all the neighbouring gentry: the peasants also dined in the park off a roasted bullock, several casks of ale were distributed, and the bells of the village rung. Matilda, who heard and saw some part of this festivity from her windows, inquired the cause; but even the servant who waited upon her had too much sensibility to tell her, and answered, "He did not know." Miss Woodley, however, soon learned the reason, and groaning with the painful secret, informed her, "Mr. Rushbrook on that day was come of age."

"*My* birthday was last week," replied Matilda; but not a word beside.

In their retired apartments, this day passed away not only soberly, but almost silently; for to speak upon any subject that did not engage their thoughts had been difficult, and to speak upon the only one that did had been afflicting.

Just as they were sitting down to dinner their bell gently rung, and in walked Sandford.

"Why are you not among the revellers, Mr. Sandford?"



cried Miss Woodley, with an ironical sneer (the first her features ever wore). "Pray, were you not invited to dine with the company?"

"Yes," replied Sandford; "but my head ached; and so I had rather come and take a bit with you."

Matilda, as if she had seen his heart as he spoke, clung round his neck and sobbed on his bosom; he put her peevishly away, crying, "Nonsense, nonsense—eat your dinner." But he did not eat any himself.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ABOUT a week after this, Lord Elmwood went out two days for a visit; consequently Rushbrook was for that time master of the house. The first morning he went a-shooting, and returning about noon, inquired of Sandford, who was sitting in the breakfast-room, if he had taken up a volume of plays left upon the table. "I read no such things," replied Sandford, and quitted the room abruptly. Rushbrook then rang for his servant, and desired him to look for the book, asking him angrily, "Who had been in the apartment? for he was sure he had left it there when he went out." The servant withdrew to inquire, and presently returned with the volume in his hand, and "Miss Woodley's compliments; she begs your pardon, Sir: she did not know the book was yours, and hopes you will excuse the liberty she took."

"Miss Woodley!" cried Rushbrook with surprise, "she comes so seldom in these apartments, I did not suppose it was she who had it—take it back to her instantly, with my respects, and I beg she will keep it."

The man went, but returned with the book again, and laying it on the table without speaking, was going away; when Rushbrook, hurt at receiving no second message, said, "I am afraid, Sir, you did very wrong when you first took this book from Miss Woodley."

"It was not from her I took it, Sir," replied the man; "it was from Lady Matilda."



Since he had entered the house, Rushbrook had never before heard the name of Lady Matilda. He was shocked—confounded more than ever ; and to conceal what he felt, instantly ordered the man out of the room.

In the meantime, Miss Woodley and Matilda were talking over this trifling occurrence ; and frivolous as it was, drew from it strong conclusions of Rushbrook's insolence and power. In spite of her pride, the daughter of Lord Elmwood even wept at the insult she had received on this insignificant occasion ; for the volume being merely taken from her at Mr. Rushbrook's command, she felt an insult ; and the manner in which it was done by the servant might contribute to the offence.

While Miss Woodley and she were upon this conversation, a note came from Rushbrook to Miss Woodley, wherein he entreated he might be permitted to see her. She sent a verbal answer, "She was engaged." He sent again, begging she would name her own time. But sure of a second denial, he followed the servant who took the last message, and as Miss Woodley came out of her apartment into the gallery to speak to him, Rushbrook presented himself, and told the man to retire.

"Mr. Rushbrook," said Miss Woodley, "this intrusion is unmannerly ; and destitute as you may think me of the friendship of Lord Elmwood——"

In the ardour with which Rushbrook was waiting to express himself, he interrupted her, and caught hold of her hand.

She immediately snatched it from him, and withdrew into her chamber.

He followed, saying in a low voice, "Dear Miss Woodley, hear me."

At that juncture Lady Matilda, who was in an inner apartment, came out of it into Miss Woodley's. Perceiving a gentleman she stopped short at the door.



Rushbrook cast his eyes upon her, and stood motionless—his lips only moved. “Do not depart, Madam,” said he “without hearing my apology for being here.”

Though Matilda had never seen him since her infancy, there was no occasion to tell her who it was that addressed her : his elegant and youthful person, joined to the incident which had just occurred, convinced her it was Rushbrook ; she looked at him with an air of surprise, but, with still more, of dignity.

“Miss Woodley is severe upon me, Madam,” continued he ; “she judges me unkindly ; and I am afraid she will prepossess you with the same unfavourable sentiments.”

Still Matilda did not speak, but looked at him with the same air of dignity.

“If, Lady Matilda,” resumed he, “I have offended you, and must quit you without pardon, I am more unhappy than I should be with the loss of your father’s protection : more forlorn, than when, an orphan boy, your mother first took pity on me.”

At this last sentence, Matilda turned her eyes on Miss Woodley, and seemed in doubt what reply she was to give.

Rushbrook immediately fell upon his knees—“Oh ! Lady Matilda,” cried he, “if you knew the sensations of my heart, you would not treat me with this disdain.”

“We can only judge of those sensations, Mr. Rushbrook,” said Miss Woodley, “by the effect they have upon your conduct ; and while you insult Lord and Lady Elmwood’s daughter by an intrusion like this, and then ridicule her abject state by mockeries like these——”

He rose from his knees instantly, and interrupted her, crying, “What can I do ? What am I to say, to make you change your opinion of me ? While Lord Elmwood has been at home I have kept an awful distance ; and though



every moment I breathed was a wish to cast myself at his daughter's feet, yet, as I feared, Miss Woodley, that you were incensed against me, by what means was I to procure an interview but by stratagem or force? This accident has given a third method, and I had not strength—I had not courage, to let it pass. Lord Elmwood will soon return, and we may both of us be hurried to town immediately; then how, for a tedious winter, could I endure the reflection that I was despised, nay, perhaps considered as an object of ingratitude, by the only child of my deceased benefactress?"

Matilda replied, with all her father's haughtiness, "Depend upon it, Sir, if you should ever enter my thoughts, it will only be as an object of envy."

"Suffer me, then, Madam," said he, "as an earnest that you do not think worse of me than I merit—suffer me to be sometimes admitted into your presence——"

She would scarce permit him to finish the period before she replied, "This is the last time, Sir, we shall ever meet, depend upon it; unless, indeed, Lord Elmwood should delegate to you the control of my actions. *His* commands I never dispute." And here she burst into tears.

Rushbrook walked towards the window, and did not speak for some time. Then, turning himself to make a reply, both Matilda and Miss Woodley were somewhat surprised to see that he had shed tears himself. Having conquered them, he said, "I will not offend you, Madam, by remaining one moment longer; and I give you my honour that, upon no pretence whatever, will I presume to intrude here again. Professions, I find, have no weight, and only by this obedience to your orders can I give a proof of that respect which you inspire. And let the agitation I now feel convince you, Lady Matilda, that, with all my seeming good fortune, I am not happier than yourself." And so much was



he agitated while he delivered this address, that it was with difficulty he came to the conclusion. When he did he bowed with reverence, as if leaving the presence of a deity and retired.

Matilda immediately entered the chamber she had left, without casting a single look at Miss Woodley by which she might guess the opinion she had formed of Mr. Rushbrook's conduct. The next time they met they did not even mention his name; for they were ashamed to own a partiality in his favour, and were too just to bring any accusation against him.

But Miss Woodley, the day following, communicated the intelligence of his visit to Mr. Sandford, who, not having been present and a witness of those marks of humility and respect which were conspicuous in the deportment of Mr. Rushbrook, was highly offended at his presumption, and threatened if he ever dared to force his company there again, he would acquaint Lord Elmwood with his arrogance, whatever might be the event. Miss Woodley, however, assured him she believed he would have no cause for such a complaint, as the young man had made the most solemn promise never to commit the like offence; and she thought it her duty to enjoin Sandford, till he did repeat it, not to mention the circumstance, even to Rushbrook himself.

Matilda could not but feel a regard for her father's heir in return for that which he had so fervently declared for her; yet the more favourable her opinion of his mind and manners, the more he became an object of her jealousy for the affections of Lord Elmwood; and he was now, consequently, an object of greater sorrow to her than when she believed him less worthy. These sentiments were reversed on his part towards her. No jealousy intervened to bar his admiration and esteem. The beauty of her person, and grandeur of her mien, not only confirmed, but improved, the exalted



idea he had formed of her previous to their meeting, and which his affection for both her parents had inspired. The next time he saw his benefactor he began to feel a new esteem and regard for him for his daughter's sake, as he had at first an esteem for her on the foundation of his love for Lord and Lady Elmwood. He gazed with wonder at his uncle's insensibility to his own happiness, and would gladly have led him to the jewel he cast away, though even his own expulsion should have been the fatal consequence. Such was the youthful, warm, generous, grateful, but unreflecting mind of Rushbrook.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

AFTER this incident Miss Woodley left her apartments less frequently than before. She was afraid, though till now mistrust had been a stranger to her heart—she was afraid that duplicity might be concealed under the apparent friendship of Rushbrook; it did not, indeed, appear so from any part of his late behaviour, but she was apprehensive for the fate of Matilda. She disliked him, too, and therefore she suspected him. For nearly three weeks she had not now paid a visit to Lord Elmwood; and though to herself every visit was a pain, yet, as Matilda took a delight in hearing of her father,—what he said, what he did, what his attention seemed most employed on, and a thousand other circumstantial pieces of information, in which Sandford would scorn to be half so particular, it was a deprivation to her that Miss Woodley did not go oftener. Now, too, the middle of November was come, and it was expected her father would soon quit his country seat.

Partly, therefore, to indulge her hapless companion, and partly because it was a duty, Miss Woodley once again paid Lord Elmwood a morning visit, and stayed dinner. Rushbrook was officiously polite (for that was the epithet she gave his attention in relating it to Lady Matilda), yet she owned he had not that forward impertinence she had formerly discovered in him, but appeared much more grave and sedate.



"But tell me of my father," said Matilda.

"I was going, my dear. But don't be concerned—don't let it vex you."

"What—what?" cried Matilda, frightened by the preface.

"Why, on my observing that I thought Mr. Rushbrook looked paler than usual, and appeared not to be in perfect health (which was really the case), your father expressed the greatest anxiety imaginable. He said he could not bear to see him look so ill; begged him, with all the tenderness of a parent, to take the advice of a physician, and added a thousand other affectionate things."

"I detest Mr. Rushbrook!" said Matilda, with her eyes flashing indignation.

"Nay, for shame," returned Miss Woodley. "Do you suppose I told you this to make you hate him?"

"No; there was no occasion for that," replied Matilda: "My sentiments, though I have never before avowed them, were long ago formed: he was always an object which added to my unhappiness; but since his daring intrusion into my apartments, he has been the object of my hatred."

"But now, perhaps, I may tell you something to please you," cried Miss Woodley.

"And what is that?" said Matilda, with indifference; for the first intelligence had hurt her spirits too much to suffer her to listen with pleasure to anything.

"Mr. Rushbrook," continued Miss Woodley, "replied to your father that his indisposition was but a slight nervous fever, and he would defer seeking a physician's advice till he went to London; on which Lord Elmwood said, 'And when do you expect to be there?' He replied, 'Within a week or two, I suppose, my Lord.' But your father answered, 'I do not mean to go myself till after Christmas.' 'No, indeed, my Lord!' said Mr. Sandford, with surprise; 'you have not passed your Christmas here these many years.' 'No,' re-



turned your father: 'but I think I feel myself more attached to this house at present than ever I did in my life.'"

"You imagine, then, my father thought of me when he said this!" cried Matilda, eagerly.

"But I may be mistaken," replied Miss Woodley. "I leave you to judge. Though I am sure Mr. Sandford imagined he thought of you; for I saw a smile over his whole face immediately."

"Did you, Miss Woodley?"

"Yes. It appeared on every feature except his lips; those he kept fast closed, for fear Lord Elmwood should perceive it."

Miss Woodley, with all her minute intelligence, did not, however, acquaint Matilda that Rushbrook followed her to the window when the Earl was out of the room, and Sandford half asleep at the other end of it, and inquired respectfully but anxiously for *her*; adding, "It is my concern for Lady Matilda which makes me thus indisposed. I suffer more than she does; but I am not permitted to tell her so, nor can I hope, Miss Woodley, that you will." She replied, "You are right, Sir." Nor did she reveal this conversation, while not a sentence that passed except that was omitted.

When Christmas arrived Lord Elmwood had many convivial days at Elmwood House; but Matilda was never mentioned by one of his guests, and, most probably, was never thought of. During all those holidays she was unusually melancholy, but sank into the deepest dejection when she was told the day was fixed on which her father was to return to town. On the morning of that day she wept incessantly, and all her consolation was, "She would go to the chamber window that was fronting the door through which he was to pass to his carriage, and, for the first time, and most probably for the last time in her life, behold him.



This design was soon forgot in another:—"She would rush boldly into the apartment where he was, and at his feet take leave of him for ever—she would lay hold of his hands, clasp his knees, provoke him to spurn her, which would be joy in comparison to this cruel indifference." In the bitterness of her grief, she once called upon her mother, and reproached her memory—but the moment she recollected this offence, (which was almost instantaneously) she became all mildness and resignation. "What have I said?" cried she, "Dear, dear honoured saint, forgive me; and for your sake I will bear all I have to bear, with patience—I will not groan, I will not even sigh again: this task I set myself to atone for what I have dared to utter."

While Lady Matilda laboured under this variety of sensations, Miss Woodley was occupied in bewailing and endeavouring to calm her sorrows—and Lord Elmwood, with Rushbrook, was ready to set off. The Earl, however, loitered, and did not once seem in haste to be gone. When at last he got up to depart, Sandford thought he pressed his hand, and shook it with more warmth than ever he had done in his life. Encouraged by this supposition, Sandford said "My Lord, won't you condescend to take your leave of Miss Woodley?"

"Certainly, Sandford," replied he, and seemed glad of an excuse to sit down again.

Impressed with the pitiable state in which he had left his only child, Miss Woodley, when she came before Lord Elmwood to bid him farewell, was pale, trembling and in tears.

Sandford, notwithstanding his patron's apparently kind humour, was alarmed at the construction he must put upon her appearance, and cried, "What, Miss Woodley, are you not recovered of your illness yet?"

Lord Elmwood, however, took no notice of her looks, but



after wishing her good health, walked slowly out of the house ; turning back frequently and speaking to Sandford, or to some other person who was behind him, as if part of his thoughts were left behind, and he went with reluctance.

When he had quitted the room where Miss Woodley was, Rushbrook, timid before her, as she had been before her benefactor, went up to her, all humility, and said, "Miss Woodley, we ought to be friends ; our concern, our devotion is paid to the same objects, and one common interest should teach us to be friendly."

She made no reply. "Will you permit me to write to you when I am away?" said he. "You may wish to hear of Lord Elmwood's health, and of what changes may take place in his resolutions. Will you permit me?" At that moment a servant came and said, "Sir, my Lord is in the carriage, and waiting for you." He hastened away, and Miss Woodley was relieved from the pain of giving him a denial.

No sooner was the travelling carriage, with all its attendants, out of sight, than Lady Matilda was conducted by Miss Woodley from her lonely retreat, into that part of the house from whence her father had just departed : and she visited every spot where he had so long resided, with a pleasing curiosity, that for a while diverted her grief. In the breakfast and dining-rooms, she leaned over those seats with a kind of filial piety, on which she was told he had been accustomed to sit. And, in the library, she took up with filial delight, the pen with which he had been writing ; and looked with the most curious attention into those books that were laid upon his reading-desk. But a hat, lying on one of the tables, gave her a sensation beyond any other she experienced on this occasion—in that trifling article of his dress, she thought she saw himself, and held it in her hand with pious reverence.



In the meantime, Lord Elmwood and Rushbrook were proceeding on the road, with hearts not less heavy than those which they had left at Elmwood House; though neither of them could so well define the cause of this oppression, as Matilda could account for the weight which oppressed hers.



## CHAPTER XL.

YOUNG as Lady Matilda was during the life of her mother, neither her youth, nor the recluse state in which she lived, had precluded her from the notice and solicitations of a nobleman who had professed himself her lover. Viscount Margrave had an estate not far distant from the retreat Lady Elmwood had chosen; and being devoted to the sports of the country, he seldom quitted it for any of those joys which the town offered. He was a young man, of a handsome person, and was, what his neighbours called, "a man of spirit." He was an excellent fox-hunter, and as excellent a companion over his bottle at the end of the chase; he was prodigal of his fortune, where his pleasures were concerned, and as those pleasures were chiefly social, his sporting companions and his mistresses (for these were also of the plural number) partook largely of his wealth.

Two months previous to Lady Elmwood's death, Miss Woodley and Lady Matilda were taking their usual walk in some fields and lanes near to their house, when chance threw Lord Margrave in their way during a thunderstorm in which they were suddenly caught; and he had the satisfaction to convey his new acquaintances to their home in his coach, safe from the fury of the elements. Grateful for the service he had rendered them, Miss Woodley and her charge permitted him to inquire occasionally after her



health, and would sometimes see him. The story of Lady Elmwood was known to Lord Margrave, and as he beheld her daughter with a passion such as he had been unused to overcome, he indulged it with the probable hope, that on the death of the mother Lord Elmwood would receive his child, and perhaps accept him as his son-in-law. Wedlock was not the plan which Lord Margrave had ever proposed to himself for happiness; but the excess of his love on this new occasion, subdued all the resolutions he had formed against the married state; and not daring to hope for the consummation of his wishes by any other means, he suffered himself to look forward to marriage as his only resource. No sooner had the long expected death of Lady Elmwood happened, than he waited with impatience to hear that Lady Matilda was sent for and acknowledged by her father; for he meant to be the first to lay before Lord Elmwood his pretensions as a suitor. But those pretensions were founded on the vague hopes of a lover only; and Miss Woodley, to whom he first declared them, said everything possible to convince him of their fallacy. As to the object of his passion, she was not only insensible, but wholly inattentive to all that was said to her on the subject. Lady Elmwood died without ever being disturbed with it; for her daughter did not even remember his proposals so as to repeat them again, and Miss Woodley thought it prudent to conceal from her friend every new incident which might give her cause for new anxieties.

When Sandford and the ladies left the north and came to Elmwood House, so much were their thoughts employed with other affairs, that Lord Margrave did not occupy a place in them; and during the whole time they had been at their new abode they had never once heard of him. He had, nevertheless, his whole mind fixed upon Lady Matilda, and had placed spies in the neighbourhood to inform him of



every circumstance relating to her situation. Having imbibed an aversion to matrimony, he heard with but little regret that there was no prospect of her ever becoming her father's heir, while such an information gave him the hope of obtaining her upon the terms of a mercenary companion.

Lord Elmwood's departure to town forwarded this hope, and flattering himself that the humiliating state in which Matilda must feel herself in the house of her father, might gladly induce her to take shelter under any other protection, he boldly advanced as soon as the Earl was gone, to make such overtures as his wishes and his vanity told him could not be rejected.

Inquiring for Miss Woodley, he easily gained admittance ; but at the sight of so much modesty and dignity in the person of Matilda, the appearance of so much good will, and yet such circumspection in her female friend, and charmed at the good sense and proper spirit which were always apparent in Sandford, he fell once more into the dread of never becoming to Lady Matilda anything of more importance to his reputation than a husband.

Even that humble hope was sometimes denied him, while Sandford set forth the impropriety of troubling Lord Elmwood on such a subject at present ; and while the Viscount's penetration, small as it was, discovered in his fair one more to discourage than to favour his wishes. Plunged, however, too deep in his passion to emerge from it in haste, he meant still to visit, and to wait for a change to happier circumstances when he was peremptorily desired by Mr. Sandford to desist from ever coming again.

"And why, Mr. Sandford?" cried he.

"For two reasons, my Lord ; in the first place, your visits might be displeasing to Lord Elmwood : in the next place, I know they are so to his daughter."



Unaccustomed to be addressed so plainly, particularly in a case where his heart was interested, he nevertheless submitted with patience; but, in his own mind, determined how long this patience should continue—no longer than it served as the means to prove his obedience, and by that artifice to secure his better reception at some future period.

On his return home, cheered with the huzzas of his jovial companions, he began to consult those friends as to what scheme was best to be adopted for the accomplishment of his desires. Some boldly advised application to the father in defiance of the old priest; but that was the very last method his Lordship himself approved, as marriage must inevitably have followed Lord Elmwood's consent; besides, though a peer, Lord Margrave was unused to associate with peers; and even the formality of an interview with one of his equals, carried along with it a terror, or at least a fatigue, to a rustic Lord. Others of his companions advised seduction; but happily the Viscount possessed no arts of this kind, to affect a heart joined with such an understanding as Matilda's. There were not wanting among his most favourite counsellors some who painted the superior triumph and gratification of force; those assured him there was nothing to apprehend under this head, as from the behaviour of Lord Elmwood to his child it was more than probable he would be utterly indifferent to any violence that might be offered her. This last advice seemed inspired by the aid of wine; and no sooner had the wine freely circulated, than this was always the expedient which appeared by far the best.

While Lord Margrave alternately cherished his hopes and his fears in the country, Rushbrook in town gave way to his fears only. Every day of his life made him more acquainted with the firm, unshaken temper of Lord Elmwood, and every day whispered more forcibly to him, that pity, gratitude,



and friendship, strong and affectionate as these passions are, were weak and cold to that which had gained the possession of his heart; he doubted, but he did not long doubt, that which he felt was love. "And yet," said he to himself, "it is love of such a kind as, arising from causes independent of the object itself, can scarcely deserve that sacred name. Did I not love Lady Matilda before I beheld her?—for her mother's sake I loved her—and even for her father's. Should I have felt the same affection for her had she been the child of other parents? No. Or should I have felt that sympathetic tenderness which now preys upon my health, had not her misfortunes excited it? No." Yet the love which is the result of gratitude and pity only, he thought had little claim to rank with his; and after the most deliberate and deep reflection, he concluded with this decisive opinion. He should have loved Lady Matilda, in *whatever state*, in *whatever circumstances*; and that the tenderness he felt towards her, and the anxiety for her happiness before he knew her, extreme as they were, were yet cool and dispassionate sensations, compared to those which her person and demeanor had inspired—and though he acknowledged that by the preceding sentiments his heart had been softened, prepared, and moulded, as it were, to receive this last impression; yet the violence of his passion told him that genuine love, if not the basis on which it was founded, had been the certain consequence. With a strict scrutiny into his heart he sought this knowledge, but arrived at it with a regret that amounted to despair.

To shield himself from despondency, he formed in his mind a thousand visions, displaying the joys of his union with Lady Matilda; but her father's implacability confounded them all. Lord Elmwood was a man who made few resolutions—but those were the effect of deliberation; and



as he was not the least capricious or inconstant in his temper, they were resolutions which no probable event could shake. Love, which produces wonders, which seduces and subdues the most determined and rigid spirits, had in two instances overcome the inflexibility of Lord Elmwood ; he married Lady Elmwood contrary to his determination, because he loved ; and for the sake of this beloved object, he had, contrary to his resolution, taken under his immediate care young Rushbrook ; but the magic which once enchanted away this spirit of immutability was no more ;—Lady Elmwood was no more, and the charm was broken.

As Miss Woodley was deprived of the opportunity of desiring Rushbrook not to write, when he asked her the permission, he passed one whole morning, in the gratification of forming and writing a letter to her, which he thought might possibly be shewn to Matilda. As he dared not touch upon any of those circumstances in which he was the most interested, this, joined to the respect he wished to pay the lady to whom he wrote, limited his letter to about twenty lines ; yet the studious manner with which these lines were dictated, the hope that they might, and the fear that they might not, be seen and regarded by Lady Matilda, rendered the task an anxiety so pleasing, that he could have wished it might have lasted for a year ; and in this tendency to magnify trifles was discoverable the never-failing symptom of ardent love.

A reply to this formal address, was a reward he wished for with impatience, but he wished in vain ; and in the midst of his chagrin at the disappointment, a sorrow, little thought of, occurred, and gave him a perturbation of mind he had never before experienced. Lord Elmwood proposed a wife to him : and in a way so assured of his acquiescence, that if Rushbrook's life had depended upon his daring to dispute



his benefactor's will, he would not have had the courage to have done so. There was, however, in his reply, and his embarrassment, something which his uncle distinguished from a free concurrence ; and, looking stedfastly at him, he said, in that stern manner which he now almost invariably assumed—

“ You have no engagements, I suppose?—Have made no previous promises?”

“ None on earth, my Lord,” replied Rushbrook, candidly.

“ Nor have you disposed of your heart ? ”

“ No, my Lord,” replied he ;—but not candidly, nor with any appearance of candour ;—for though he spoke hastily, it was rather like a man frightened than assured. He hurried to tell the falsehood he thought himself obliged to tell, that the pain and shame might be over : but there he was deceived—the lie once told was more troublesome than in the conception, and added another confusion to the first.

Lord Elmwood now fixed his eyes upon him with a sullen scorn, and, rising from his chair, said, “ Rushbrook, if you have been so inconsiderate as to give away your heart, tell me so at once, and tell me the object.”

Rushbrook shuddered at the thought.

“ I here,” continued the Earl, “ tolerate the first untruth you ever told me, as the false assertion of a lover ; and give you an opportunity of recalling it : but after this moment, it is a lie between man and man—a lie to your friend and father, and I will not forgive it.”

Rushbrook stood silent, confused, alarmed, and bewildered in his thoughts. Lord Elmwood proceeded—

“ Name the person, if there is any, on whom you have bestowed your heart ; and though I do not give you the hope that I shall not censure your folly, I will at least not reproach you for having at first denied it.”



To repeat these words in writing, the reader must condemn the young man that he could hesitate to own he loved, if he was even afraid to name the object of his passion ; but his interrogator had made the two answers inseparable, so that all evasions of the second, Rushbrook knew would be fruitless, after having avowed the first—and how could he confess the latter? The absolute orders he received from the steward on his first return from his travels, were, “Never to mention his daughter, any more than his late wife, before Lord Elmwood.” The fault of having rudely intruded into Lady Matilda’s presence, rushed also upon his mind ; for he did not even dare to say by what means he had beheld her. But, more than all, the threatening manner in which this rational and apparently conciliating speech was uttered, the menaces, the severity which sat upon the Earl’s countenance while he delivered those moderate words, might have intimidated a man wholly independent, and less used to fear him than his nephew had been.

“You make no answer, Sir,” said Lord Elmwood, after waiting a few moments for his reply.

“I have only to say, my Lord,” returned Rushbrook, “that although my heart may be totally disengaged, I may yet be disinclined to marriage.”

“May ! May ! Your heart *may* be disengaged,” repeated he. “Do you dare to reply to me equivocally, when I have asked a positive answer?”

“Perhaps I am not positive myself, my Lord ; but I will enquire into the state of my mind, and make you acquainted with it very soon.”

As the angry demeanour of his uncle affected Rushbrook with fear, so that fear, powerfully, but with proper manliness, expressed, again softened the displeasure of Lord Elmwood ; and seeing and pitying his nephew’s sensibility, he now changed his austere voice, and said mildly, but firmly—



“I give you a week to consult with yourself; at the expiration of that time I shall talk with you again, and I command you to be then prepared to speak, not only without deceit, but without hesitation.” He left the room at these words, and left Rushbrook released from a fate, which his apprehensions had beheld impending that moment.

He had now a week to call his thoughts together, to weigh every circumstance, and to determine whether implicitly to submit to Lord Elmwood’s recommendation of a wife, or to revolt from it; and see another, with more subserviency to his will, appointed his heir.

Undetermined how to act upon this trial which was to decide his future destiny, Rushbrook suffered so poignant an uncertainty, that he became at length ill, and before the end of the week that was allotted him for his reply, he was confined to his bed in a high fever. Lord Elmwood was extremely affected at his indisposition; he gave him every care he could bestow, and even much of his personal attendance. This last favour had a claim upon the young man’s gratitude superior to every other obligation which since his infancy his benefactor had conferred; and he was at times so moved by those marks of kindness he received, that he would form the intention of tearing from his heart every trace that Lady Matilda had left there, and, as soon as his health would permit him, obey to the utmost every wish his uncle had conceived. Yet again, her pitiable situation presented itself to his compassion, and her beautiful person to his love. Divided between the claims of obligation to the father and tender attachment to the daughter, his illness was increased by the tortures of his mind, and he once sincerely wished for that death of which he was in danger, to free him from the dilemma in which his affections had involved him.

At the time his disorder was at the height, and he lay



complaining of the violence of his fever, Lord Elmwood, taking his hand, asked him "If there was any thing he could do for him?"

"Yes, yes, my Lord, a great deal," he replied, eagerly.

"What is it, Harry?"

"Oh, my Lord," replied he, "that is what I must not tell you."

"Defer it, then, till you are well," said Lord Elmwood, afraid of being surprised or affected by the state of his health into any promises which he might hereafter find the impropriety of granting.

"And when I recover, my Lord, you give me leave to reveal to you my wishes, let them be what they will!"

His uncle hesitated; but, seeing an anxiety for the answer, by his raising himself upon his elbow in the bed and staring wildly, Lord Elmwood at last said, "Certainly—yes, yes," as a child is answered for its quiet.

That Lord Elmwood could have no suspicion what the real petition was, which Rushbrook meant to present him, is certain; but it is certain he expected he had some request to make, with which it might be wrong for him to comply, and therefore he now avoided hearing what it was; for great as his compassion for him was in his present state, it was not of sufficient force to urge him to give him a promise he did not mean to perform.

Rushbrook, on his part, was pleased with the assurance he might speak when he was restored to health; but no sooner was his fever abated, and his senses perfectly recovered from the slight derangement his malady had occasioned, than the lively remembrance of what he had hinted alarmed him, and he was too abashed to look his kind but awful relation in the face.

Lord Elmwood's cheerfulness, however, on his returning health, and his undiminished attention, soon convinced



him that he had nothing to fear. But, alas! he found, too, he had nothing to hope. As his health returned his wishes re-established also; and with his wishes, his despair.

Convinced by what had passed, that his nephew had something on his mind which he feared to reveal, the Earl no longer doubted but that some youthful attachment had armed him against any marriage he should propose; but he had so much pity for his present weak state, as to delay that further inquiry, which he had threatened before his illness, to a time when his health should be entirely restored.

It was the end of May before Rushbrook was able to partake in the usual routine of the day. The country was now prescribed him as the means of complete restoration; and as Lord Elmwood designed to leave London some time in June, he advised him to go to Elmwood House a week or two before him. This advice was received with delight, and a letter was sent to Mr. Sandford to prepare for Mr. Rushbrook's arrival.



## CHAPTER XLI.

DURING the illness of Rushbrook, news had been sent of his danger from the servants in town to those at Elmwood House, and Lady Matilda expressed compassion when she was told of it. She began to conceive, the instant she thought he would soon die, that his visit to her had merit rather than impertinence in its design, and that he might possibly be a more deserving man than she had supposed him to be.

Even Sandford and Miss Woodley began to recollect qualifications he possessed, which they never had reflected on before ; and Miss Woodley, in particular, reproached herself that she had been so severe and inattentive to him. Notwithstanding the prospects his death pointed out to her, it was with infinite joy she heard he was recovered ; nor was Sandford less satisfied ; for he had treated the young man too unkindly not to dread lest any ill should befall him. But, although he was glad to hear of his restored health, when he was informed he was coming down to Elmwood House for a few weeks in the style of its master, Sandford, with all his religious and humane principles, could not help conceiving, "That if the youth had been properly prepared to die, he had been as well out of the world as in it."

He was still less his friend when he saw him arrive with his usual florid complexion. Had he come pale and sickly,



Sandford had been kind to him ; but in apparently good health and spirits, he could not form his lips to tell him he was "glad to see him."

On his arrival, Matilda, who for five months had been at large, secluded herself as she would have done upon the arrival of Lord Elmwood ; but with far different sensations. Notwithstanding her restriction on the latter occasion, the residence of her father in that house had been a source of pleasure, rather than of sorrow to her ; but from the abode of Rushbrook she derived punishment alone.

When, from inquiries, Rushbrook found that on his approach, Matilda had retired to her own confined apartments, the thought was torture to him. It was the hope of seeing and conversing with her, of being admitted at all times to her society as the mistress of the house, that had raised his spirits, and effected his perfect cure beyond any other cause ; and he was hurt to the greatest degree at this respect, or rather contempt, shown to him by her retreat.

It was, nevertheless, a subject too delicate for him to touch upon in any one sense : an invitation for her company on his part, might carry the appearance of superior authority, and an affected condescension, which he justly considered as the worst of all insults. And yet, how could he support the reflection that his visit had placed the daughter of his benefactor, as a dependent stranger in that house, where, in reality, *he* was the dependent, and she the lawful heiress.

For two or three days he suffered the torment of these meditations, hoping that he should come to an explanation of all he felt, by a fortunate meeting with Miss Woodley ; but when that meeting occurred, though he observed she talked to him with less reserve than she had formerly done, and even gave some proofs of the native kindness of



her disposition, yet she scrupulously avoided naming Lady Matilda ; and when he diffidently inquired of her health, a cold restraint overspread Miss Woodley's face, and she left him instantly.

To Sandford it was still more difficult for him to apply ; for though frequently together, they were never sociable ; and as Sandford seldom disguised his feelings—to Rushbrook he was always severe, and sometimes unmannerly.

In this perplexed situation, the country air was rather of detriment than service to the late invalid ; and had he not, like a true lover, clung fast to fancied hope, while he could perceive no reality but despair, he would have returned to town, rather than by his stay have placed in a subordinate state the object of his adoration.

Persisting in his hopes, he one morning met Miss Woodley in the garden, and, engaging her a longer time than usual in conversation, at last obtained her promise—"She would that day dine with him and Mr. Sandford."

But no sooner had she parted from him than she repented of her consent ; and upon communicating it, Matilda, for the first time in her life, darted upon her kind companion, a look of the most cutting reproach and haughty resentment.

Miss Woodley's own sentiments had upbraided her before ; but she was not prepared to receive so pointed a mark of disapprobation from her young friend, till now, duteous and humble to her as to a mother, and not less affectionate. Her heart was too susceptible to bear this disrespectful and contumelious frown, from the object of her long-devoted care and concern ; the tears instantly covered her face, and she laid her hands upon her heart, as if she thought it would break.

Matilda was moved ; but she possessed too much of the



manly indignation of her father, to discover what she felt for the first few minutes. Miss Woodley, who had given so many tears to her sorrows, but never, till now, one to her anger, had a deeper sense of this indifference than of the anger itself, and, to conceal what she suffered, left the room. Matilda, who had been till this time working at her needle, seemingly composed, now let her work drop from her hand, and sat for a while in a deep reverie. At length she rose up, and followed Miss Woodley to the other apartment.

She entered grave, majestic, and apparently serene, while her poor heart fluttered with a thousand distressing sensations. She approached Miss Woodley (who was still in tears) with silence ; and, awed by her manners, the faithful friend of her deceased mother exclaimed—

“Dear Lady Matilda, think no more on what I have done ; do not resent it any longer, and I’ll beg your pardon.”

Miss Woodley rose as she uttered these last words ; but Matilda laid fast hold of her to prevent the posture she offered to take, and instantly assumed it herself.

“Oh, let this be my atonement !” she cried, with the most earnest supplication.

They interchanged forgiveness ; and, as this reconciliation was sincere, they each, without reserve, gave their opinion upon the subject that had caused the misunderstanding ; and it was agreed an apology should be sent to Mr. Rushbrook, “That Miss Woodley had been suddenly indisposed,” nor could this be said to differ from the truth, for since what had passed she was unfit to pay a visit.

Rushbrook, who had been all the morning elated with the advance he supposed he had made in that lady’s favour, was highly disappointed, vexed, and angry, when this apology was delivered ; nor did he, nor perhaps could he, conceal



what he felt, although his unkind observer, Mr. Sandford, was present.

"I am a very unfortunate man!" said he, as soon as the servant was gone who brought the message.

Sandford cast his eyes upon him with a look of surprise and contempt.

"A very unfortunate man, indeed, Mr. Sandford," repeated he, "although you treat my complaint contemptuously."

Sandford made no reply, and seemed above making one.

They sat down to dinner. Rushbrook ate scarcely anything, but drank frequently. Sandford took no notice of either, but had a book (which was his custom when he dined with persons whose conversation was not interesting to him) laid by the side of his plate, which he occasionally looked into, as the dishes were removing, or other opportunities served.

Rushbrook, just now more hopeless than ever of forming an acquaintance with Lady Matilda, began to give way to symptoms of impatience; and they made their first attack by urging him to treat on the same level of familiarity that he himself was treated, Mr. Sandford, to whom he had till now ever behaved with the most profound tokens of respect.

"Come," said he to him, as soon as the dinner was removed, "lay aside your book and be good company."

Sandford lifted up his eyes upon him—stared in his face—and cast them on the book again.

"Pshaw," continued Rushbrook, "I want a companion; and as Miss Woodley has disappointed me, I must have your company."

Sandford now laid his book down upon the table, but, still holding his fingers in the pages he was reading, said,



"And why are you disappointed of Miss Woodley's company? When people expect what they have no right to hope, 't is impertinent assurance to complain they are disappointed."

"I had a right to hope she would come," answered Rushbrook, "for she promised she would."

"But what right had you to ask her?"

"The right every one has to make his time pass as agreeably as he can."

"But not at the expense of another."

"I believe, Mr. Sandford, it would be a heavy expense to you to see me happy: I believe it would cost you even your own happiness."

"That is a price I have not now to give," replied Sandford, and began reading again.

"What! you have already paid it away? No wonder that at your time of life it should be gone. But what do you think of my having already squandered mine?"

"I don't think about you," returned Sandford, without taking his eyes from the book.

"Can you look me in the face and say that, Mr. Sandford?—No, you cannot; for you know you *do* think of me, and you know you hate me." Here he drank two glasses of wine, one after another. "And I can tell you why you hate me," continued he: "it is from a cause for which I often hate myself."

Sandford read on.

"It is on Lady Matilda's account you hate me, and use me thus."

Sandford put down the book hastily, and put both his hands by his side.

"Yes," resumed Rushbrook, "you think I am wronging her."

"I think you insult her," exclaimed Sandford, "by this



rude mention of her name; and I command you at your peril to desist."

"At my peril! Mr. Sandford? Do you assume the authority of my Lord Elmwood?"

"I do on this occasion; and if you dare to give your tongue a freedom——"

Rushbrook interrupted him—"Why then I boldly say (and as her friend you ought rather to applaud than resent it)—I boldly say, that my heart suffers so much for her situation that I am regardless of my own. I love her father—I loved her mother more—but I love *her* beyond either"

"Hold your licentious tongue," cried Sandford, "or quit the room."

"Licentious! Oh, the pure thoughts that dwell in her innocent mind are not less sensual than mine towards her. Do you upbraid me with my respect, my pity for her? They are the sensations which impel me to speak thus undisguisedly, even to you, my open—no, even worse—my secret enemy!"

"Insult *me* as you please, Mr. Rushbrook; but beware how you mention Lord Elmwood's daughter.

"Can it be to her dishonour that I pity her; that I would quit the house this moment never to return, so that she supplied the place which I withhold from her?"

"Go, then," cried Sandford.

"It would be of no use to her, or I would. But come, Mr. Sandford, I will dare do as much as you. Only second me, and I will entreat Lord Elmwood to be reconciled—to see and own her."

"Your vanity would be equal to your temerity—*you* entreat? She must greatly esteem those paternal favours which *your* entreaties gained her! Do you forget, young man, how short a time it is since *you* were *entreated for*?"



"I prove that I do not, while this anxiety for Lady Matilda arises from what I feel on that very account."

"Remove your anxiety, then, from her to yourself; for were I to let Lord Elmwood know what has now passed ——"

"It is for your own sake, not for mine, if you do not."

"You shall not dare me to it, Mr. Rushbrook." And he rose from his seat. "You shall not dare me to do you an injury. But to avoid the temptation, I will never again come into your company, unless my friend, Lord Elmwood, be present to protect me and his child from your insults."

Rushbrook rose in yet more warmth than Sandford. "Have you the injustice to say that I have insulted Lady Matilda?"

"To speak of her at all is, in you, an insult. But you have done more; you have dared to visit her; to force into her presence, and shock her with your offers of services which she scorns; and with your compassion, which she is above."

"Did she complain to you?"

"She or her friend did."

"I rather suppose, Mr. Sandford, that you have bribed some of the servants to reveal this circumstance."

"The suspicion becomes Lord Elmwood's heir."

"It becomes the man who lives in a house with you."

"I thank you, Mr. Rushbrook, for what has passed this day: it has taken a weight off my mind. I thought my disinclination to you might perhaps arise from prejudice: this conversation has relieved me from those fears, and I thank you." Saying this, he calmly walked out of the room, and left Rushbrook to reflect on what he had been doing.

Heated with the wine he had drunk, (and which Sandford, engaged on his book, had not observed,) no sooner was he alone, than he became by degrees cool and repentant.



"What had he done?" was the first question to himself. "He had offended Sandford." The man whom reason as well as prudence had ever taught him to respect, and even to revere. He had grossly offended the firm friend of Lady Matilda, by the unreserved and wanton use of her name. All the retorts he had uttered came now to his memory; with a total forgetfulness of all that Sandford had said to provoke them.

He once thought to follow him and beg his pardon; but the contempt with which he had been treated, more than all the anger, withheld him.

As he sat forming plans how to retrieve the opinion, ill as it was, which Sandford formerly entertained of him, he received a letter from Lord Elmwood, kindly inquiring after his health, and saying that he should be down early in the following week. Never were the friendly expressions of his uncle half so welcome to him; for they served to soothe his imagination, racked with Sandford's wrath and his own displeasure.



## CHAPTER XLII.

WHEN Sandford acted deliberately, he always acted up to his duty: it was his duty to forgive Rushbrook, and he did so; but he had declared he would never "be again in his company unless Lord Elmwood was present;" and with all his forgiveness he found an unforgiving gratification in the duty of being obliged to keep his word.

The next day Rushbrook dined alone, while Sandford gave his company to the ladies. Rushbrook was too proud to seek to conciliate Sandford by abject concessions; but he endeavoured to meet him as by accident, and meant to try what, in such a case, a submissive apology might effect. For two days all the schemes he formed on that head proved fruitless: he could never procure even a sight of him. But on the evening of the third day, taking a lonely walk, he turned the corner of a grove, and saw, in the very path he was going, Sandford accompanied by Miss Woodley; and, what agitated him infinitely more, Lady Matilda was with them. He knew not whether to proceed or to quit the path and palpably shun them. To one who seemed to put an unkind construction upon all he said and did, he knew that to do either would be to do wrong. In spite of the desire he felt to pass so near to Matilda, could he have known what conduct would have been deemed the most respectful, to *that* he would have submitted, whatever painful denial it had cost him. But undetermined whether to go forward, or to cross to another path, he still walked on



till he came too nigh to recede: he then, with a diffidence not affected, but most powerfully felt, pulled off his hat; and, without bowing, stood respectfully silent while the company passed. Sandford walked on some paces before, and took no farther notice as he went by him, than just touching the fore part of his hat with his finger. Miss Woodley courtesied as she followed; but Lady Matilda made a full stop, and said, in the gentlest accents, "I hope, Mr. Rushbrook, you are perfectly recovered."

It was the sweetest music he had ever listened to; and he replied, with the most reverential bow, "I am better a great deal, Ma'am;" then instantly pursued his way, as if he did not dare to utter or wait for another syllable.

Sandford seldom found fault with Lady Matilda; not because he loved her, but because she seldom did wrong. Upon this occasion, however, he was half inclined to reprimand her; but yet he did not know what to say. The subsequent humility of Rushbrook had taken from the indiscretion of her speaking to him, and the event could by no means justify his censure. On hearing her begin to speak, Sandford had stopped; and as Rushbrook, after replying, walked away, Sandford called to her crossly, "Come, come along;" but at the same time he put out his elbow for her to take hold of his arm.

She hastened her steps, and did so; then, turning to Miss Woodley, she said, "I expected you would have spoken to Mr. Rushbrook: it might have prevented me."

Miss Woodley replied, "I was at a loss what to do. When we met formerly he always spoke first."

"And he ought now," cried Sandford, angrily; and then added, with a sarcastic smile, "It is certainly proper that the *superior* should be the first who speaks."

"He did not look as if he thought himself our superior," replied Matilda.



"No," returned Sandford; "some people can put on what looks they please."

"Then while he looks so pale," replied Matilda, "and so dejected, I can never forbear speaking to him when we meet, whatever he may think of it."

"And were he and I to meet a hundred, nay, a thousand times," returned Sandford, "I don't think I should ever speak to him again."

"Bless me! what for, Mr. Sandford?" cried Matilda; for Sandford, who was not a man that repeated little incidents, had never mentioned the circumstance of their quarrel.

"I have taken such a resolution," answered he; "yet I bear him no enmity."

As this short reply indicated that he meant to say no more, no more was asked; and the subject was dropped.

In the meantime Rushbrook, happier than he had been for months, intoxicated with delight at that voluntary mark of civility he had received from Lady Matilda, felt his heart so joyous and so free from every particle of malice, that he resolved, in the humblest manner, to make atonement for the violation of decorum he had lately committed against Mr. Sandford.

Too happy at this time to suffer a mortification from any indignities he might receive, he sent his servant to him into his study, as soon as he was returned home, to beg to know "If he might be permitted to wait upon him with a message he had to deliver from Lord Elmwood."

The servant returned—"Mr. Sandford desired he would send the message by him or the house-steward." This was highly affronting; but Rushbrook was not in a humour to be offended, and he sent again, begging he would admit him; but the answer was, "He was busy."

Thus wholly defeated in his hopes of reconciliation, his new transports felt an alloy; and the few days that re-



mained before Lord Elmwood came he passed in solitary musing, and ineffectual walks and looks towards that path in which he had met Matilda. She came that way no more; indeed, scarce quitted her apartment, in the practice of that confinement she was to experience on the arrival of her father.

All her former agitations now returned. On the day he arrived she wept; all the night she did not sleep; and the name of Rushbrook again became hateful to her. The Earl came in extremely good health and spirits, but appeared concerned to find Rushbrook less well than when he went from town. Sandford was now under the necessity of being in Rushbrook's company; yet he would never speak to him but when he was absolutely compelled, or look at him but when he could not help it. Lord Elmwood observed this conduct, yet he neither wondered nor was offended by it. He had perceived what little esteem Sandford had shewed his nephew from his first return; but he forgave, in Sandford's humour, a thousand faults he would not forgive in any other; nor did he deem this one of his greatest faults, knowing the demand upon his partiality from another object.

Miss Woodley waited on Lord Elmwood as formerly; dined with him, and related, as heretofore, to the attentive Matilda, all that passed.

About this time Lord Margrave, deprived by the season of all the sports of the field, felt his love for Matilda (which had been violent, even though divided with the love of hunting) now too strong to be subdued; and he resolved, though reluctantly, to apply to her father for his consent to their union; but writing to Sandford this resolution, he was once more repulsed, and charged, as a man of honour, to forbear to disturb the tranquillity of the family by any application of the kind. To this Sandford received no answer; for the



peer, highly incensed at his mistress's repugnance to him, determined more firmly than ever to consult his own happiness alone; and as that depended merely upon his obtaining her, he cared not by what method it was effected.

About a fortnight after Lord Elmwood came into the country, as he was riding one morning, his horse fell with him, and crushed his leg in so unfortunate a manner as to be at first pronounced of dangerous consequence. He was brought home in a post-chaise; and Matilda heard of the accident with more grief than would, perhaps, on such an occasion, have been experienced by the most fondled child.

In consequence of the pain he suffered, his fever was one night very high; and Sandford, who seldom quitted his apartment, went frequently to his bedside, every time with the secret hope he should hear him ask to see his daughter. He was every time disappointed; yet he saw him shake, with a cordial friendship, the hand of Rushbrook, as if he delighted in seeing those he loved.

The danger in which Lord Elmwood was supposed to be was but of short duration, and his sudden recovery succeeded. Matilda, who had wept, moaned, and watched during the crisis of his illness, when she heard he was amending, exclaimed, with a kind of surprise at the novelty of the sensation, "And this is joy that I feel! Oh, I never till now knew what those persons felt who experienced joy!"

Nor did she repine, like Mr. Sandford and Miss Woodley, at her father's inattention to her during his malady; for she did not hope like them—she did not hope he would behold her, even in dying.

But, notwithstanding his seeming indifference while his indisposition continued, no sooner was he recovered so as to receive the congratulations of his friends, than there was no one person he evidently showed so much satisfaction at



seeing as Miss Woodley. She waited upon him timorously, and with more than ordinary distaste at his late conduct, when he put out his hand with the utmost warmth to receive her, he drew her to him, saluted her (an honour he had never in his life conferred before), and with signs of the sincerest friendship and affection. Sandford was present; and, ever associating the idea of Matilda with Miss Woodley, felt his heart bound with a triumph it had not enjoyed for many a day.

Matilda listened with delight to the recital Miss Woodley gave on her return, and many times while it lasted exclaimed, "She was happy." But poor Matilda's sudden transports of joy, which she termed happiness, were not made for long continuance; and if she ever found cause for gladness, she far oftener had motives for grief.

As Mr. Sandford was sitting with her and Miss Woodley one evening, about a week after, a person rung at the bell, and inquired for him. On being told of it by the servant, he went to the door of the apartment, and cried, "Oh, is it you? Come in." An elderly man entered, who had been for many years the head gardener at Elmwood House—a man of honesty and sobriety, and with an indigent family of aged parents, children, and other relations, who subsisted wholly on the income arising from his place. The ladies, as well as Sandford, knew him well; and they all, almost at once, asked, "What was the matter?" for his looks told them something distressful had befallen him.

"Oh, Sir," said he to Sandford, "I come to entreat your interest."

"In what, Edwards?" said Sandford, with a mild voice; for, when his assistance was supplicated in distress, his rough tones always took a plaintive key.

"My Lord has discharged me from his service," returned



Edwards, trembling, and the tears starting in his eyes. "I am undone, Mr. Sandford, unless you plead for me."

"I will," said Sandford, "I will."

"And yet I am almost afraid for your success," replied the man; "for my Lord has ordered me out of his house this moment; and though I knelt down to him to be heard, he had no pity."

Matilda sighed from the bottom of her heart; and yet she envied this poor man who had been kneeling to her father.

"What was your offence?" cried Sandford.

The man hesitated; then, looking at Matilda, said, "I'll tell you, Sir, some other time."

"Did you name me before Lord Elmwood?" cried she, eagerly, and terrified.

"No, Madam," replied he; "but I unthinkingly spoke of my poor Lady, who is dead and gone."

Matilda burst into tears.

"How came you to do so mad a thing?" cried Sandford; and the encouragement which his looks had once given him now fled from his face.

"It was unthinkingly," repeated Edwards; "I was shewing my Lord some plans for the new walks, and told him, among other things, that her Ladyship had many years ago approved of them.—'Who?' cried he.—Still I did not call to mind, but said, 'Lady Elmwood, Sir, while you were abroad.'—As soon as these words were delivered, I saw my doom in his looks, and he commanded me to quit his house and service that instant."

"I am afraid," said Sandford, shaking his head, "I can do nothing for you."

"Yes, Sir, you know you have more power over my Lord than anybody; and perhaps you may be able to save me and all mine from misery."



"I would if I could," replied Sandford, quickly.

"You can but try, Sir."

Matilda was all this while bathed in tears; nor was Miss Woodley much less affected. Lady Elmwood was before their eyes; Matilda beheld her in her dying moments; Miss Woodley saw her as the gay ward of Dorriforth.

"Ask Mr. Rushbrook," said Sandford: "prevail on him to speak for you. He has more power than I have."

"He has not enough, then," replied Edwards; "for he was in the room with my Lord when what I have told you happened."

"And did he say nothing?" asked Sandford.

"Yes, Sir; he offered to speak in my behalf, but my Lord interrupted him, and ordered him out of the room. He instantly went.

Sandford, now observing the effect which this narration had on the two ladies, led the man to his own apartments, and there assured him he dared not undertake his cause; but that if time or chance should happily make an alteration in his Lord's disposition, he would be the first who would endeavour to replace him. Edwards was obliged to submit; and, before the next day at noon, his pleasant house by the side of the park, his garden, and his orchard, which he had occupied above twenty years, were cleared of their old inhabitant, and all his wretched family.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

THIS melancholy incident, perhaps, affected Matilda, and all the friends of the deceased Lady Elmwood, beyond any other that had occurred since her death. A few days after this circumstance, Miss Woodley, in order to divert the disconsolate mind of Lady Matilda (and in the hope of bringing her some little anecdotes to console her for that which had given her so much pain), waited upon Lord Elmwood in his library, and borrowed some books out of it. He was now perfectly well from his fall, and received her with his usual politeness, but, of course, not with that peculiar warmth which he had discovered when he received her just after his illness. Rushbrook was in the library at the same time. He showed her several beautiful prints which Lord Elmwood had just received from London, and appeared anxious to entertain and give tokens of his esteem and respect for her. But what gave her pleasure beyond any other attention was, that after she had taken (by the aid of Rushbrook) about a dozen volumes from different shelves, and had laid them together, saying she would send her servant to fetch them, Lord Elmwood went carefully to the place where they were, and, taking up each book, examined minutely what it was. One author, he complained, was too light, another too depressing, and put them on the shelves again; another was erroneous, and he changed it for a better. Thus, he warned her against some, and selected



other authors, as the most cautious preceptor culls for his pupil, or a fond father for his darling child. She thanked him for his attention to her, but her heart thanked him for his attention to his daughter; for as she had herself never received such a proof of his care since all their long acquaintance, she reasonably supposed that Matilda's reading, and not hers, was the object of his solicitude.

Having in these books store of comfort for poor Matilda, she eagerly returned with them; and in reciting every particular circumstance, made her consider the volumes almost like presents from her father.

The month of September was now arrived; and Lord Elmwood, accompanied by Rushbrook, went to a small shooting seat, near twenty miles distant from Elmwood Castle, for a week's particular sport. Matilda was once more at large; and one beautiful morning, about eleven o'clock, seeing Miss Woodley walking on the lawn before the house, she hastily took her hat to join her; and, not waiting to put it on, went nimbly down the great staircase with it hanging on her arm. When she had descended a few stairs, she heard a footstep proceeding slowly up; and (from what emotion she could not tell) she stopped short, half resolved to return back. She hesitated a single instant whether she should or not—then went a few steps further, till she came to the second landing-place; when, by the sudden winding of the staircase, Lord Elmwood was immediately before her.

She had felt something like affright before she saw him; but her reason told her she had nothing to fear, as he was away. But now, the appearance of a stranger whom she had never before seen; the authority in his looks, as well as in the sound of his steps; a resemblance to the portrait she had been shewn of him; a start of astonishment which he gave on beholding her; but, above all, her *fears*, confirmed



her that it was him. She gave a scream of terror; put out her trembling hands to catch the balustrades for support—missed them—and fell motionless into her father's arms.

He caught her, as, by the same impulse, he would have caught any other person falling for want of aid. Yet when he found her in his arms, he still held her there, gazed on her attentively, and once pressed her to his bosom.

At length, trying to escape the snare into which he had been led, he was going to leave her on the spot where she fell, when her eyes opened, and she uttered, "Save me!" Her voice unmanned him. His long-restrained tears now burst forth, and, seeing her relapsing into the swoon, he cried out eagerly to recall her. Her name did not, however, come to his recollection—nor any name but this: "Miss Milner—dear Miss Milner!"

That sound did not awaken her; and now again he wished to leave her in this senseless state, that, not remembering what had passed, she might escape the punishment.

But at this instant Giffard, with another servant, passed by the foot of the stairs; on which Lord Elmwood called to them, and into Giffard's hands delivered his apparently dead child, without one command respecting her, or one word of any kind; while his face was agitated with shame, with pity, with anger, with paternal tenderness.

As Giffard stood trembling, while he relieved his Lord from this hapless burden, her father had to unloose her hand from the side of his coat, which she had caught fast hold of as she fell, and grasped so closely, it was with difficulty removed. On attempting to take the hand away he trembled, faltered, then bade Giffard do it.

"Who? I, my Lord! I separate you!" cried he. But recollecting himself, "My Lord, I will obey your commands



whatever they are." And seizing her hand, pulled it with violence: it fell, and her father went away.

Matilda was carried to her own apartments, and laid upon the bed; and Miss Woodley hastened to attend her, after listening to the recital of what had passed.

When Lady Elmwood's old and affectionate friend entered the room, and saw her youthful charge lying pale and speechless, yet no father by to comfort or soothe her, she lifted up her hands to Heaven, exclaiming, with a burst of tears, "And is this the end of thee, my poor child? Is this the end of all our hopes—of thy own fearful hopes—and of thy mother's supplications? Oh, Lord Elmwood! Lord Elmwood!"

At that name Matilda started, and cried, "Where is he? Is it a dream, or have I seen him?"

"It is all a dream, my dear," said Miss Woodley.

"And yet I thought he held me in his arms," she replied: "I thought I felt his hands press mine. Let me sleep and dream again."

Now thinking it best to undeceive her, "It is no dream, my dear," returned Miss Woodley.

"Is it not?" cried she, rising up, and leaning on her elbow. "Then I suppose I must go away—go for ever away."

Sandford now entered. Having been told the news, he came to condole; but at the sight of him Matilda was terrified, and cried, "Do not reproach me, do not upbraid me; I know I have done wrong—I know I had but one command from my father, and that I have disobeyed."

Sandford could not reproach her, for he could not speak: he therefore only walked to the window and concealed his tears.

That whole day and night was passed in sympathetic grief, in alarm at every sound, lest it should be a messenger to pronounce Matilda's destiny.



Lord Elmwood did not stay upon this visit above three hours at Elmwood House: he then set off again for the seat he had left, where Rushbrook still remained, and from whence his Lordship had merely come by accident to look over some writings which he wanted immediately despatched to town.

During his short continuance here Sandford cautiously avoided his presence; for he thought, in a case like this, what nature could not of herself effect, no art, no arguments of his could accomplish: to nature, then, and Providence, he left the whole. What these two powerful principles brought about, the reader will be informed, when he peruses the following letter, received early the next morning by Miss Woodley.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

*A Letter from Giffard, Lord Elmwood's House Steward, to Miss Woodley.*

"MADAM,—My Lord, above a twelvemonth ago, acquainted me he had permitted his daughter to reside in his house; but at the same time he informed me the grant was under a certain restriction, which, if ever broken, I was to see his then determination (of which he also acquainted me) put in execution. In consequence of Lady Matilda's indisposition, Madam, I have ventured to delay this notice till morning. I need not say with what concern I now give it, or mention to you, I believe, what is forfeited. My Lord stayed but a few hours yesterday, after the unhappy circumstance on which I write took place; nor did I see him after, till he was in his carriage; he then sent for me to the carriage door, and told me he should be back in two days' time, and added, 'Remember your duty.' That duty, I hope, Madam, you will not require me to explain in more direct terms. As soon as my Lord returns, I have no doubt but he will ask me if it is fulfilled; and I shall be under the greatest apprehension should his commands not be obeyed.

"If there is anything wanting for the convenience of your and Lady Matilda's departure, you have but to order it, and it is at your service: I mean, likewise, any cash you may



have occasion for. I should presume to add my opinion where you might best take up your abode; but with such advice as you will have from Mr. Sandford, mine would be but assuming.

“I would also have waited upon you, Madam, and have delivered myself the substance of this letter; but I am an old man, and the changes I have been witness to in my Lord’s house, since I first lived in it, have added, I think, to my age many a year; and I have not the strength to see you upon this occasion. I loved my Lady—I love my Lord—and I love their child; nay, so I am sure does my Lord himself; but there is no accounting for his resolutions, or for the alteration his disposition has lately undergone.

“I beg pardon, Madam, for this long intrusion, and am, and ever will be (while you and my Lord’s daughter are so) your afflicted humble servant,

“ROBERT GIFFARD.

“Elmwood House, Sept. 12.”

When this letter was brought to Miss Woodley, she knew what it contained before she opened it, and therefore took it with an air of resignation: yet though she guessed the momentous part of its contents, she dreaded in what words it might be related; and having now no essential good to expect, hope, that will never totally expire, clung at this crisis to little circumstances; and she hoped most fervently the terms of the letter might not be harsh, but that Lord Elmwood had delivered his final sentence in gentle language. The event proved he had; and, lost to every important comfort, she felt grateful to him for this small one.

Matilda, too, was cheered by this letter; for she expected something worse; and one of the last lines, in which



Giffard said he knew "his Lordship loved her," she thought repaid her for the purport of the other part.

Sandford was not so easily resigned or comforted. He walked about the room when the letter was shown to him—called it cruel—stifled his tears, and wished to show his resentment only; but the former burst through all his endeavours, and he sunk into grief.

Nor was the fortitude of Matilda, which came to her assistance on the first onset of this trial, sufficient to arm her, when the moment came at which she was to quit the house—her father's house—never to see that or him again.

When word was brought that the carriage was at the door, which was to convey her from all she held so dear, and she saw before her the prospect of a long youthful and healthful life, in which misery and despair were all she could discern, that despair seized her at once, and gaining courage from her sufferings, she cried—

"What have I to fear if I disobey my father's commands once more? He cannot use me worse. I'll stay till he returns, again throw myself in his way, and then I will not faint, but plead for mercy. Perhaps, were I to kneel to him—kneel, like other children to their parents—and beg his blessing, he would not refuse it me."

"You must not try," said Sandford, mildly.

"Who," cried she, "shall prevent my flying to my father? Have I another friend on earth? Have I one relation in the world but him? This is the second time I have been turned from his house. In my infant state my cruel father turned me out; but then he sent me to a mother: now I have none, and I will stay with him."

Again the steward sent to let them know the coach was waiting.

Sandford now, with a determined countenance, went coolly



up to Lady Matilda, and, taking her hand, seemed resolved to lead her to the carriage.

Accustomed to be awed by every serious look of his, she yet resisted this, and cried, "Would *you* be the minister of my father's cruelty?"

"Then," said Sandford solemnly to her, "farewell—from this moment you and I part. I will take my leave, and do you remain where you are—at least till you are forced away. But I'll not stay to be driven hence; for it is impossible your father will suffer any friend of yours to continue here after this disobedience. Adieu."

"I will go this moment," said she, and rose hastily.

Miss Woodley took her at her word, and hurried her immediately out of the room.

Sandford followed slow behind, as if he had followed at her funeral.

When she came to that spot on the stairs where she had met her father, she started back, and scarce knew how to pass it. When she had—"There he held me in his arms," said she; "and I thought I felt him press me to his heart; but I now find I was mistaken."

As Sandford came forward to hand her into the coach—"Now you behave well," said he. "By this behaviour you do not entirely close all prospect of reconciliation with your father."

"Do you think it is not yet impossible?" cried she, clasping his hand. "Giffard says he loves me," continued she; "and do you think he might yet be brought to forgive me?"

"Forgive you!" cried Sandford.

"Suppose I was to write to him and entreat his forgiveness?"

"Do not write yet," said Sandford, with no cheering accent.



The carriage drove off; and as it went Matilda leaned her head from the window to survey Elmwood House from the roof to the foundation. She cast her eyes upon the gardens, too—upon the fish-ponds—even the coach-houses and all the offices adjoining—which, as objects that she should never see again, she contemplated as objects of importance.



## CHAPTER XLV.

RUSHBROOK, who, at twenty miles' distance, could have no conjecture what had passed at Elmwood House during the short visit Lord Elmwood made there, went that way with his dogs and gun, in order to meet him on his return, and accompany him in the chaise back. He did so; and, getting into the carriage, told him eagerly the sport he had had during the day; laughed at an accident that had befallen one of his dogs; and for some time did not perceive but that his uncle was perfectly attentive. At length, observing he answered more negligently than usual to what he said, Rushbrook turned his eyes quickly upon him, and cried—

“My Lord, are you not well?”

“Yes; perfectly well, I thank you, Rushbrook,” and he leaned back against the carriage.

“I thought, Sir,” returned Rushbrook, “you spoke languidly. I beg your pardon.”

“I have the headache a little,” answered he; then, taking off his hat, brushed the dust from it, and, as he put it on again, fetched a most heavy sigh, which no sooner had escaped him, than, to drown its sound, he said, briskly—

“And so you tell me you have had good sport to-day?”

“No, my Lord; I said but indifferent.”

“True; so you did. Bid the man drive faster; it will be dark before we get home.”



"You will shoot to-morrow, my Lord?"

"Certainly."

"How does Mr. Sandford do, Sir?"

"I did not see him."

"Not see Mr. Sandford, my Lord! But he was out, I suppose; for they did not expect you at Elmwood House."

"No, they did not."

In such conversation Rushbrook and his uncle continued to the end of their journey. Dinner was then immediately served; and Lord Elmwood appeared much in his usual spirits; at least, not suspecting any cause for their abatement, Rushbrook did not observe any alteration.

Lord Elmwood went, however, earlier to bed than ordinary, or rather to his bed-chamber; for though he retired some time before his nephew, when Rushbrook passed his chamber-door it was open, and he not in bed, but sitting in a musing posture, as if he had forgot to shut it.

When Rushbrook's valet came to attend his master, he said to him—

"I suppose, Sir, you do not know what has happened at the castle?"

"For Heaven's sake, what?" cried Rushbrook.

"My Lord has met Lady Matilda," replied the man.

"How? Where? What's the consequence?"

"We don't know yet, Sir; but all the servants suppose her Ladyship will not be suffered to remain there any longer."

"They all suppose wrong," returned Rushbrook, hastily; "my Lord loves her, I am certain, and this event may be the happy means of his treating her as his child from this day."

The servant smiled, and shook his head.

"Why, what more do you know?"

"Nothing more than I have told you, Sir, except that his



Lordship took no kind of notice of her Ladyship that appeared like love."

Rushbrook was all uneasiness and anxiety to know the particulars of what had passed; and now Lord Elmwood's inquietude, which he had but slightly noticed before, came full to his observation. He was going to ask more questions; but he recollected that Lady Matilda's misfortunes were too sacred to be talked of thus familiarly by the servants of the family; besides, it was evident this man thought, and but naturally, it might not be for his master's interest the father and the daughter should be united; and therefore would give to all he said the opposite colouring.

In spite of his prudence, however, and his delicacy towards Matilda, Rushbrook could not let his valet leave him till he had inquired and learned a circumstantial account of what had happened; except, indeed, the order received by Giffard, which being given after Lord Elmwood was in his carriage, and in concise terms, the domestics who attended him (and from whom this man had gained his intelligence) were unacquainted with it.

When the servant had left Rushbrook alone, the perturbation of his mind was so great, that he was at length undetermined whether to go to bed, or to rush into his uncle's apartment, and at his feet beg for that compassion upon his daughter which he feared he had denied her. But then, to what peril would he not expose himself by such a step? Nay, he might, perhaps, even injure her whom he wished to serve; for if his uncle was at present unresolved whether to forgive or to resent this disobedience to his commands, another's interference might enrage and precipitate him on the latter resolution.

This consideration was so weighty it resigned Rushbrook to the suspense he was compelled to endure till the morning, when he flattered himself that by watching every look and



motion of Lord Elmwood his penetration would be able to discover the state of his heart, and how he meant to act.

But the morning came, and he found all his prying curiosity was of no avail. Lord Elmwood did not drop one word, give one look, or use one action that was not customary.

On first seeing him, Rushbrook blushed at the secret with which he was intrusted; then as he gazed on the Earl, contemplated the joy he ought to have known in clasping in his arms a child like Matilda, whose tenderness, reverence, and duty had deprived her of all sensation at his sight; which was, in Rushbrook's mind, an honour that rendered him superior to what he was before.

They were in the fields all the day as usual; Lord Elmwood now cheerful, and complaining no more of the headache. Yet once being separated from his nephew, Rushbrook crossed over a stile into another field, and found him sitting by the side of a bank, his gun lying by him, and himself lost in thought. He rose on seeing him, and proceeded to the sport as before.

At dinner, he said he should not go to Elmwood House the next day, as he had appointed, but stay where he was three or four days longer. From these two small occurrences, Rushbrook would fain have extracted something by which to judge the state of his mind; but he found that was impossible. He had caught him so musing many a time before; and as to his prolonging his stay, that might arise from the sport; or, indeed, had anything more material swayed him, who could penetrate whether it was the effect of the lenity or the severity he had dealt towards his child;—whether his continuance there was to shun her, or to shun the house from whence he had banished her?

The three or four days for their temporary sojourn being passed, they both returned together to Elmwood House.



Rushbrook thought he saw his uncle's countenance change as they entered the avenue; yet he did not appear less in spirits; and when Sandford joined them at dinner, the Earl went with his usual attention to him, and (as was his custom after any separation) put out his hand cheerfully to take his. Sandford said, "How do you do, my Lord?" cheerfully in return; but put both his hands into his bosom, and walked to the other side of the room. Lord Elmwood did not seem to observe this affront; nor was it done as an affront; it was merely what poor Sandford could not help; for he felt that he could *not* shake hands with him.

Rushbrook soon learned the news that Matilda was gone; and Elmwood House was to him a desert—he saw there no real friend of hers, except poor Sandford, and to him Rushbrook knew himself now more displeasing than ever: and all his overtures of atonement he, at this time found more and more ineffectual. Matilda was exiled; and her supposed triumphant rival was, to Sandford, odious beyond what he had ever been.

In alleviation of their banishment, Miss Woodley, with her charge, had not returned to their old retreat: but were gone to a farm-house, not farther than thirty miles from Lord Elmwood's. Here Sandford, with little inconvenience visited them; nor did his patron ever take notice of his occasional absence; for as he had before given his daughter, in some measure, to his charge, so honour, delicacy, and the common ties of duty, made him approve, rather than condemn, his attention to her.

Though Sandford's frequent visits soothed Matilda, they could not comfort her; for he had no consolation to bestow that was suited to her mind; her father having given no one token of regret for what he had done. He had even inquired sternly of Giffard, on his returning home,—

"If Miss Woodley had left the house."



The steward, guessing the whole of his meaning, answered, "Yes, my Lord; and *all* your commands in that respect have been obeyed."

He replied, "I am satisfied;" and, to the grief of the old man, he appeared really so.

To the farm-house, the place of Matilda's residence, there came, besides Sandford, another visitor, far less welcome—Viscount Margrave. He had heard with surprise, and still greater joy, that Lord Elmwood had once more closed his doors against his daughter. In this, her discarded state, he no longer burdened his lively imagination with the dull thoughts of marriage, but once more formed the barbarous design of making her his mistress.

Ignorant of a certain decorum which attended all Lord Elmwood's actions, he suspected that his child might be in want; and an acquaintance with the worst part of her sex informed him that relief from poverty was the sure bargain for his success. With these hopes he again paid Miss Woodley and her a visit; but the coldness of the former, and the haughtiness of the latter, still kept him at a distance, and again made him fear to give one allusion to his purpose: but he returned home, resolved to write what he durst not speak. He did so—he offered his services, his purse, his house; they were rejected with disdain, and a stronger prohibition than ever given to his visits.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

LORD ELMWOOD had now allowed Rushbrook a long vacation in respect to his answer upon the subject of marriage: and the young man vainly imagined his intentions upon that subject were entirely given up. One morning, however, as he was with him in the library—

“Henry,” said his uncle, with a pause at the beginning of his speech, which indicated that he was going to say something of importance,—“Henry—you have not forgot the discourse I had with you a little time previous to your illness?”

Henry paused too—for he wished to have forgotten it—but it was too strongly impressed upon his memory. Lord Elmwood resumed—

“What! equivocating again, Sir? Do you remember it, or do you not?”

“Yes, my Lord, I do.”

“And are you prepared to give me an answer?”

Rushbrook paused again.

“In our former conversation,” continued the Earl, “I gave you but a week to determine: there has, I think, elapsed since that time, half a year.”

“About as much, Sir.”

“Then, surely, you have now made up your mind?”

“I had done that at first, my Lord, if it had met with your concurrence.”

“You wished to lead a bachelor’s life, I think you said?”



Rushbrook bowed.

"Contrary to my will?"

"No, my Lord, I wished to have your approbation."

"And you wished for my approbation of the very opposite thing to that which I proposed? But I am not surprised. Such is the gratitude of the world; and such is yours."

"My Lord, if you doubt my gratitude——"

"Give me a proof of it, Harry, and I will doubt no longer."

"Upon every other subject but this, my Lord, Heaven is my witness that your desires——"

Lord Elmwood interrupted him—

"I understand you: upon every other subject but the only one which my content requires, you are ready to obey me. I thank you."

"My Lord, do not torture me with this suspicion; it is so contrary to my deserts, that I cannot bear it."

"Suspicion of your ingratitude! You judge too favourably of my opinion—it amounts to certainty."

"Then, to convince you, Sir, I am not ungrateful—tell me who the lady is you have chosen for me, and here I give you my word, I will sacrifice all my future prospects of happiness—all, for which I would wish to live—and become her husband as soon as you shall appoint."

This was spoken with a tone so expressive of despair, that Lord Elmwood replied—

"And while you obey me, you take care to let me know it will cost you your future peace. This is, I suppose to enhance the merit of the obligation; but I shall not accept your acquiescence on those terms."

"Then, in dispensing with it, I hope for your pardon."

"Do you suppose, Rushbrook, I can pardon an offence, the sole foundation of which arises from a spirit of dis-



obedience? for you have declared to me your affections are disengaged. In our last conversation did you not say so?"

"At first I did, my Lord: but you permitted me to consult my heart more closely; and I have since found that I was mistaken."

"You then own you at first told me a falsehood, and yet have all this time kept me in suspense without confessing it."

"I waited, my Lord, till you should inquire——"

"You have then, Sir, waited too long," and the fire flashed from his eyes.

Rushbrook now found himself in that perilous state that admitted of no medium of resentment, but by such dastardly conduct on his part as would wound both his truth and courage; and thus, animated by his danger, he was resolved to plunge boldly at once into the depth of his patron's anger.

"My Lord," said he (but he did not undertake this task without sustaining the trembling and convulsion of his whole frame),—"My Lord—waiving for a moment the subject of my marriage—permit me to remind you, that when I was upon my sick bed you promised, that on my recovery you would listen to a petition I should offer to you."

"Let me recollect," replied he. "Yes; I do remember something of it. But I said nothing to warrant any improper petition."

"It's impropriety was not named, my Lord."

"No matter,—that you must judge of, and answer for the consequences."

"I would answer with my life, willingly; but I own that I shrink from your displeasure."

"Then do not provoke it."

"I have already gone too far to recede; and you would



of course demand an explanation, if I attempted to stop here."

"I should."

"Then, my Lord, I am bound to speak; but do not interrupt me: hear me out, before you banish me from your presence for ever."

"I will, Sir," replied he, prepared to hear something that would excite his resentment, and yet determined to hear with patience to the conclusion.

"Then, my Lord," cried Rushbrook, in the greatest agitation of mind and body, "your daughter——"

The resolution Lord Elmwood had taken (and on which he had given his word to his nephew not to interrupt him) immediately gave way. The colour rose in his face, his eye darted lightning, and his hand was lifted up with the emotion that word had created.

"You promised to hear me, my Lord," cried Rushbrook, "and I claim your promise."

He now suddenly overcame his violence of passion, and stood silent and resigned to hear him; but with a determined look, expressive of the vengeance that should ensue.

"Lady Matilda," resumed Rushbrook, "is an object that wrests from me the enjoyment of every blessing your kindness bestows. I cannot but feel myself as her adversary,—as one who has supplanted her in your affections,—who supplies her place while she is exiled, a wanderer, and an orphan."

The Earl took his eyes from Rushbrook during this last sentence, and cast them on the floor.

"If I feel gratitude towards you, my Lord," continued he, "gratitude is innate in my heart; and I must also feel it towards *her* who first introduced me to your protection."

Again the colour flew to Lord Elmwood's face, and again



he could hardly restrain himself from uttering his indignation.

"It was the mother of Lady Matilda," continued Rushbrook, "who was this friend to me; nor will I ever think of marriage, or any other joyful prospect, while you abandon the only child of my beloved patroness, and load me with rights which belong to her."

Here Rushbrook stopped: Lord Elmwood was silent too, for near half a minute; but still his countenance continued fixed with his unvaried resolves.

After this long pause, the Earl said with composure, which denoted firmness, "Have you finished, Mr. Rushbrook?"

"All that I dare to utter, my Lord; and I fear I have already said too much."

Rushbrook now trembled more than ever, and looked pale as death; for the ardour of speaking being over, he waited his sentence with less constancy of mind than he expected he should.

"You disapprove my conduct, it seems," said Lord Elmwood; "and in that you are but like the rest of the world; and yet, among all my acquaintance, you are the only one who has dared to insult me with your opinion. And this you have not done inadvertently, but willingly and deliberately. But as it has been my fate to be used ill, and severed from all those persons to whom my soul has been most attached, with less regret I can part from you than if this were my first trial."

There was a truth and a pathetic sound in the utterance of these words that struck Rushbrook to the heart; and he beheld himself as a barbarian, who had treated his benevolent and only friend with insufferable liberty—void of respect for those corroding sorrows which had embittered so many years of his life, and in open violation of his most



peremptory commands. He felt that he deserved all he was going to suffer, and he fell upon his knees ; not so much to deprecate the doom he saw impending, as thus humbly to acknowledge it was his due.

Lord Elmwood, irritated by this posture, as a sign of the presumptuous hope that he might be forgiven, suffered now his anger to burst all bounds ; and, raising his voice, he exclaimed with rage—

“Leave my house, Sir. Leave my house instantly, and seek some other home.”

Just as these words were begun, Sandford opened the library door, was witness to them, and to the imploring situation of Rushbrook. He stood silent with amazement.

Rushbrook arose, and feeling in his mind a presage that he might never from that hour behold his benefactor more, as he bowed in token of obedience to his commands, a shower of tears covered his face ; but Lord Elmwood, unmoved, fixed his eyes upon him, which pursued him with enraged looks to the end of the room. Here he had to pass Sandford ; who, for the first time in his life, took hold of him by the hand, and said to Lord Elmwood, “My Lord, what’s the matter ?”

“That ungrateful villain,” cried he, “has dared to insult me. Leave my house this moment, Sir.”

Rushbrook made an effort to go, but Sandford still held his hand ; and meekly said to Lord Elmwood—

“He is but a boy, my Lord, and do not give him the punishment of a man.”

Rushbrook now snatched his hand from Sandford’s, and threw it with himself upon his neck, where he indeed sobbed like a boy.

“You are both in league,” exclaimed Lord Elmwood.

“Do you suspect me of partiality to Mr. Rushbrook ?” said Sandford, advancing nearer to the Earl.



Rushbrook had now gained the point of remaining in the room; but the hope that privilege inspired (while he still harboured all the just apprehensions for his fate) gave birth, perhaps, to a more exquisite sensation of pain than despair would have done. He stood silent—confounded; hoping that he was forgiven—fearing that he was not.

As Sandford approached still nearer to Lord Elmwood, he continued, "No, my Lord; I know you do not suspect me of partiality to Mr. Rushbrook. Has any part of my behaviour ever discovered it?"

"You now, then, only interfere to irritate me."

"If that were the case," returned Sandford, "there have been occasions when I might have done it more effectually; when my own heart-strings were breaking, because I would not irritate, or add to what you suffered."

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Sandford," he returned mildly and thankfully.

"And if, my Lord, I have proved any merit in a late forbearance, reward me for it now; and take this young man from the depth of sorrow in which I see he is sunk, and say you pardon him."

Lord Elmwood made no answer; and Rushbrook, drawing strong inferences of hope from his silence, lifted up his eyes from the ground, and ventured to look in his face: he found it serene to what it had been, but still strongly marked with agitation. He cast his eyes away again, in shame and confusion.

On which his uncle said to him, "I shall postpone the exacting of your obedience to my late orders till you think fit once more to provoke them; and then, not even Sandford shall dare to plead your excuse."

Rushbrook bowed.

"Go, leave the room, Sir."

He instantly obeyed.



Then Sandford, turning to Lord Elmwood, shook him by the hand, and cried, "My Lord, I thank you—I thank you very kindly, my Lord. I shall now begin to think I have some weight with you."

"You might indeed think so, did you know how much I have pardoned."

"What was his offence, my Lord?"

"Such as I would not have forgiven you, or any earthly being besides himself; but while you were speaking in his behalf, I recollected there was a gratitude so extraordinary in the hazards he ran, that almost made him pardonable."

"I guess the subject, then," cried Sandford; "and yet I could not have supposed——"

"It is a subject we cannot speak on, Sandford; therefore let us drop it."

At these words the discourse concluded.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

To the relief of Rushbrook, Lord Elmwood that day dined from home, and he had not the confusion to see him again till the evening. Previous to this, Sandford and he met at dinner; but as the attendants were present, nothing passed on either side respecting the incident of the morning. Rushbrook, from the peril which had so lately threatened him, was now in his perfectly cool and dispassionate senses; and, notwithstanding the real tenderness which he bore to the daughter of his benefactor, he was not insensible to the comfort of finding himself once more in the possession of all those enjoyments he had forfeited, and for a moment lost.

As he reflected on this, to Sandford he felt the first tie of acknowledgment. But for his compassion, he knew he should have been, at that very time of their meeting at dinner, away from Elmwood House for ever, and bearing on his mind a still more painful recollection,—the burden of his kind patron's continual displeasure. Filled with these thoughts, all the time of dinner, he could scarce look at his companion without tears of gratitude; and whenever he attempted to speak to him, gratitude choked his utterance.

Sandford, on his part, behaved just the same as ever; and to shew he did not wish to remind Rushbrook of what he had done, he was just as uncivil as ever.



Among other things he said, "He did not know Lord Elmwood dined from home; for if he had, he should have dined in his own apartment."

Rushbrook was still more obliged to him for all this; and the weight of obligations with which he was oppressed made him long for an opportunity to relieve himself by expressions. As soon, therefore, as the servants were all withdrawn, he began—

"Mr. Sandford, whatever has been your opinion of *me*, I take pride to myself that in my sentiments towards *you*, I have always distinguished you for that humane, disinterested character you have this day proved."

"Humane and disinterested," replied Sandford, "are flattering epithets, indeed, for an old man going out of the world, and who can have no temptation to be otherwise."

"Then suffer me to call your actions generous and compassionate, for they have saved me——"

"I know, young man," cried Sandford, interrupting him, "you are glad at what I have done, and that you find a gratification in telling me you are; but it is a gratification I will not indulge you with. Therefore, say another sentence on the subject, and," rising from his seat, "I'll leave the room, and never come into your company again, whatever your uncle may say to it."

Rushbrook saw by the solemnity of his countenance he was serious, and positively assured him he would never thank him more; on which Sandford took his seat again, but he still frowned, and it was many minutes before he conquered his ill-humour. As his countenance became less sour, Rushbrook fell from some general topics he had eagerly started in order to appease him, and said—

"How hard is it to restrain conversation from the subject of our thoughts? And yet amidst our dearest friends, and among persons who have the same dispositions and senti-



ments as our own,—their minds, too, fixed upon the self-same objects,—this constraint is practised; and thus society, which was meant for one of our greatest blessings, becomes insipid, nay, often more wearisome than solitude.”

“I think, young man,” replied Sandford, “you have made pretty free with your speech to-day, and ought not to complain of the want of toleration on that score.”

“I do complain,” replied Rushbrook; “for if toleration were more frequent, the favour of obtaining it would be less.”

“And your pride, I suppose, is above receiving a favour?”

“Never from those I esteem; and, to convince you of it, I wish this moment to request a favour of you.”

“I dare say I shall refuse it. However, what is it?”

“Permit me to speak to you upon the subject of Lady Matilda.”

Sandford made no answer, consequently did not forbid him; and he proceeded—

“For her sake—as I suppose Lord Elmwood may have told you—I this morning rashly threw myself into the predicament from whence you released me. For her sake I have suffered much; for her sake I have hazarded a great deal, and am still ready to hazard more.”

“But for your own sake, do not,” returned Sandford, dryly.

“You may laugh at these sentiments as romantic, Mr. Sandford; but if they are, to me they are nevertheless natural.”

“But of what service are they to be either to her or to yourself?”

“To me they are painful, and to her would be but impertinent were she to know them.”

“I sha’n’t inform her of them, so do not trouble yourself to caution me against it.”



"I was not going—you know I was not—but I was going to say that from no one so well as from you could she be told my sentiments without the danger of receiving offence."

"And what impression do you wish to give her, from her becoming acquainted with them?"

"The impression that she has one sincere friend; that upon every occurrence in life there is a heart so devoted to all she feels, that she never can suffer without the sympathy of another; or can ever command him and all his fortunes, to unite for her welfare, without his ready, his immediate compliance."

"And do you imagine that any of your professions, or any of her necessities, would ever prevail upon her to put you to the trial?"

"Perhaps not."

"What, then, are the motives which induce you to wish her to be told of this?"

Rushbrook hesitated.

"Do you think," continued Sandford, "the intelligence will give her any satisfaction?"

"Perhaps not."

"Will it be of any to yourself?"

"The highest in the world."

"And so all you have been urging upon this occasion is, at last, only to please yourself."

"You wrong my meaning. It is her merit which inspires me with the desire of being known to her. It is her sufferings, her innocence, her beauty——"

Sandford stared; Rushbrook proceeded, "It is her——"

"Nay, stop where you are," cried Sandford; "you are arrived at the zenith of perfection in a woman, and to add one qualification more would be an anti-climax."

"Oh," cried Rushbrook with warmth, "I loved her before I ever beheld her."



"Loved her!" cried Sandford, with marks of astonishment: "you are talking of what you did not intend."

"I am, indeed," returned he in confusion: "I fell by accident on the word love."

"And by the same accident stumbled on the word beauty; and thus by accident am I come to the truth of all your professions."

Rushbrook knew that he loved; and though his affection had sprung from the most laudable motives, yet was he ashamed of it as of a vice: he rose, he walked about the room, and he did not look Sandford in the face for a quarter of an hour. Sandford, satisfied that he had judged rightly, and yet unwilling to be too hard upon a passion which he readily believed must have had many noble virtues for its foundation, now got up and went away, without saying a word in censure, though not a word in approbation.

It was in the month of October, and just dark at the time Rushbrook was left alone, yet in the agitation of his mind, arising from the subject on which he had been talking, he found it impossible to remain in the house, and therefore walked into the fields. But there was another inducement more powerful than the necessity of walking: it was the allurements of passing along that path where he had last seen Lady Matilda; and where, for the only time, she had condescended to speak to him divested of haughtiness, and with a gentleness that dwelt upon his memory beyond all her other endowments.

Here he retraced his own steps repeatedly, his whole imagination engrossed with her idea, till the sound of her father's carriage returning from his visit roused him from the delusion of his trance, to the dread of the embarrassment he should endure on next meeting him. He hoped Sandford might be present; and yet he was now almost



as much ashamed of seeing him as his uncle, whom he had so lately offended.

Loath as much to leave the spot where he was, as to enter the house, he remained there, till he considered it would be ill manners, in his present humiliated situation, not to show himself at the usual supper hour, which was now nearly arrived.

As he laid his hand upon the door of the apartment to open it, he was sorry to hear by Lord Elmwood's voice he was in the room before him ; for there was something much more conspicuously distressing in entering where he already was, than had his uncle come in after him. He found himself, however, re-assured, by overhearing the Earl laugh and speak in a tone expressive of the utmost good humour to Sandford, who was with him.

Yet again, he felt all the awkwardness of his own situation ; but, making one courageous effort, opened the door and entered. Lord Elmwood had been away half the day, had dined abroad, and it was necessary to take some notice of his return. Rushbrook, therefore, bowed humbly ; and, what was more to his advantage, he looked humbly. His uncle made a slight return to his salutation, but continued the recital he had begun to Sandford ; then sat down to the supper-table—supped—and passed the whole evening without saying a syllable, or even casting a look, in remembrance of what had passed in the morning. Or, if there was any token that showed he remembered the circumstance at all, it was the putting his glass to his nephew's when Rushbrook called for wine, and drinking at the time he did.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE repulse Lord Margrave received did not diminish the ardour of his pursuit ; for as he was no longer afraid of resentment from the Earl, whatever treatment his daughter might receive, he was determined the anger of Lady Matilda, or of her female friend, should not impede his pretensions.

Having taken this resolution, he laid the plan of an open violation of laws both human and divine ; and he determined to bear away that prize by force, which no art was likely to procure. He concerted with two of his favourite companions ; but their advice was, "One struggle more of fair means." This was totally against his inclination ; for he had much rather have encountered the piercing cries of a female in the last agonies of distress than the fatigue of her sentimental harangues, or elegant reproofs, such as he had the sense to understand, but not the capacity to answer.

Stimulated, however, by his friends to one more trial, in spite of the formal dismissal he had twice received, he intruded another visit on Lady Matilda at the farm. Provoked beyond bearing at such unfeeling assurance, Matilda refused to come into the room where he was, and Miss Woodley alone received him, and expressed her surprise at the little attention he had paid to her explicit desire.

"Madam," replied the nobleman, "to be plain with you, I am in love."



"I do not in the least doubt it, my Lord," replied Miss Woodley : "nor ought you to doubt the truth of what I advance, when I assure you, that you have not the smallest reason to hope your love will be returned ; for Lady Matilda is resolved never to listen to your passion."

"That man," he replied, "is to blame, who can relinquish his hopes upon the mere resolution of a lady."

"And that lady would be wrong," replied Miss Woodley, "who should intrust her happiness to the care of a man who can think thus meanly of her, and of her sex."

"I think highly of them all," he replied ; "and to convince you in how high an estimation I hold her in particular, my whole fortune is at her command."

"Your entire absence from this house, my Lord, she would consider as a much greater mark of your respect."

A long conversation, as uninteresting as the foregoing, ensued, when the unexpected arrival of Mr. Sandford put an end to it. He started at the sight of Lord Margrave ; but the Viscount was much more affected at the sight of him.

"My Lord," said Sandford boldly to him, "have you received any encouragement from Lady Matilda to authorise this visit ?"

"None, upon my honour, Mr. Sandford ; but I hope you know how to pardon a lover !"

"A rational one I do ; but you, my Lord, are not of that class while you persecute the pretended object of your affection."

"Do you call it persecution that I once offered her a share of my title and fortune ; and even now, declare my fortune to be at her disposal ?"

Sandford was uncertain whether he understood his meaning ; but Lord Margrave, provoked at his ill reception, felt a triumph in removing his doubts, and proceeded thus :—



"For the discarded daughter of Lord Elmwood cannot expect the same proposals which I made, while she was acknowledged and under the protection of her father."

"What proposals, then, my Lord?" asked Sandford, hastily."

"Such," replied he, "as the Duke of Avon made to her mother."

Miss Woodley quitted the room that instant. But Sandford, who never felt resentment but against those in whom he saw some virtue, calmly replied—

"My Lord, the Duke of Avon was a gentleman, a man of elegance and breeding ; and what have you to offer in recompense for your defects in qualities like these?"

"My wealth," replied he, "opposed to her indigence."

Sandford smiled, and answered—

"Do you suppose *that* wealth can be esteemed which has not been able to make you respectable? What is it makes wealth valuable? Is it the pleasures of the table ; the pleasure of living in a fine house, or of wearing fine clothes? These are pleasures a lord enjoys, but in common with his valet. It is the pleasure of being conspicuous which makes riches desirable ; but if we are conspicuous only for our vice and folly, had we not better remain in poverty?"

"You are beneath my notice."

"I trust I shall continue so ; and that your Lordship will never again condescend to come where I am."

"A man of rank condescends to mix with any society, when a pretty woman is the object."

"My Lord, I have a book here in my pocket, which I am eager to read : it is an author who speaks sense and reason. Will you pardon the impatience I feel for such company, and permit me to call your carriage?"

Saying this, he went hastily and beckoned to the coachman. The carriage drove up, the door was opened, and



Lord Margrave, ashamed to be exposed before his attendants, and convinced of the utter inutility of remaining any longer where he was, departed.

Sandford was soon joined by the ladies; and the conversation falling, of course, upon the nobleman who had just taken his leave, Sandford unwarily exclaimed—

“I wish Rushbrook had been here.”

“Who?” cried Lady Matilda.

“I do believe,” said Miss Woodley, “that young man has some good qualities.”

“A great many,” returned Sandford, mutteringly.

“Happy young man!” cried Matilda: “he is beloved by all those whose affection it would be my choice to possess, beyond any other blessing this world could bestow.”

“And yet I question if Rushbrook be happy,” said Sandford.

“He cannot be otherwise,” returned Matilda, “if he is a man of understanding.”

“He does not want understanding, neither,” replied Sandford, “although he has certainly many indiscretions.”

“But which Lord Elmwood, I suppose,” said Matilda, “looks upon with tenderness.”

“Not upon all his faults,” answered Sandford; “for I have seen him in very dangerous circumstances with your father.”

“Have you, indeed?” cried Matilda: “then I pity him.”

“And I believe,” said Miss Woodley, “that from his heart he compassionates you. Now, Mr. Sandford,” continued she, “though this is the first time I ever heard you speak in his favour (and I once thought as indifferently of Mr. Rushbrook as you can do), yet now I will venture to ask you whether you do not think he wishes Lady Matilda much happier than she is?”

“I have heard him say so,” answered Sandford.



"It is a subject," returned Lady Matilda, "which I did not imagine you, Mr. Sandford, would have permitted him to have mentioned lightly in your presence."

"Lightly ! Do you suppose, my dear, we turned your situation into ridicule ?"

"No, Sir ; but there is a sort of humiliation in the grief to which I am doomed, that ought surely to be treated with the highest degree of delicacy by my friends."

"I don't know on what point you fix real delicacy ; but if it consists in sorrow, the young man gives a proof he possesses it, for he shed tears when I last heard him mention your name."

"I have more cause to weep at the mention of his."

"Perhaps so ; but let me tell you, Lady Matilda, that your father might have preferred a more unworthy object."

"Still had he been to me," she cried, "an object of envy. And, as I frankly confess my envy of Mr. Rushbrook, I hope you will pardon my malice, which is, you know, but a consequent crime."

The subject now turned again upon Lord Margrave ; and all of them being firmly persuaded this last reception would put an end to every further intrusion from him, they treated his pretensions, and himself, with the contempt they inspired, but not with the caution that was requisite.



## CHAPTER XLIX.

THE next morning, early, Mr. Sandford returned to Elmwood House, but with his spirits depressed, and his heart overcharged with sorrow. He had seen Lady Matilda, the object of his visit; but he had beheld her considerably altered in her looks and in her health. She was become very thin; and instead of the vivid bloom that used to adorn her cheeks, her whole complexion was of a deadly pallor; her countenance no longer expressed hope or fear, but a fixed melancholy; she shed no tears, but was all sadness. He had beheld this, and he had heard her insulted by the licentious proposals of a nobleman, from whom there was no satisfaction to be demanded, because she had no friend to vindicate her honour.

Rushbrook, who suspected where Sandford was gone, and imagined he would return on the following day, took his morning's ride so as to meet him on the road, at the distance of a few miles from the castle; for, since his perilous situation with Lord Elmwood, he was so fully convinced of the general philanthropy of Sandford's character, that, in spite of his churlish manners, he now addressed him, free from that reserve to which his rough behaviour had formerly given birth. And Sandford, on his part, believing he had formed an illiberal opinion of Lord Elmwood's heir, though he took no pains to let him know that his opinion was changed, yet resolved to make him restitution upon every occasion that offered.



Their mutual greetings, when they met, were uncere-  
monious, but cordial; and Rushbrook turned his horse and  
rode back with Sandford: yet, intimidated by his respect  
and tenderness for Lady Matilda, rather than by fear of the  
rebuffs of his companion, he had not the courage to name  
her till the ride was just finished, and they came within a  
few yards of the house. Incited then by the apprehension  
he might not soon again enjoy so fit an opportunity, he  
said—

“Pardon me, Mr. Sandford, if I guess where you have  
been, and if my curiosity forces me to inquire after Miss  
Woodley’s and Lady Matilda’s health.”

He named Miss Woodley first, to prolong the time before  
he mentioned Matilda; for though to name her gave him  
extreme pleasure, yet it was a pleasure accompanied by con-  
fusion and pain.

“They are both very well,” replied Sandford: “at least,  
they did not complain they were sick.”

“They are not in spirits, I suppose?” said Rushbrook.

“No, indeed,” replied Sandford, shaking his head.

“No new misfortune has happened, I hope?” cried Rush-  
brook; for it was plain to see Sandford’s spirits were un-  
usually cast down.

“Nothing new,” returned he, “except the insolence of a  
young nobleman.”

“What nobleman?” cried Rushbrook.

“A lover of Lady Matilda’s,” replied Sandford.

Rushbrook was petrified. “Who? what lover, Mr. Sand-  
ford? Explain.”

They were now arrived at the house; and Sandford, with-  
out making any reply to this question, said to the servant  
who took his horse—

“She has come a long way this morning: take care of  
her.”



This interruption was torture to Rushbrook, who kept close to his side, in order to obtain a further explanation ; but Sandford, without attending to him, walked negligently into the hall, and before they advanced many steps, they were met by Lord Elmwood.

All further information was put an end to for the present.

"How do you do, Sandford?" said Lord Elmwood, with extreme kindness, as if he thanked him for the journey which, it was likely, he suspected he had been taking.

"I am indifferently well, my Lord," replied he, with a face of deep concern, and a tear in his eye, partly in gratitude for his patron's civility, and partly in reproach for his cruelty.

It was not now till the evening that Rushbrook had an opportunity of renewing the conversation which had been so painfully interrupted.

In the evening, no longer able to support the suspense into which he had been thrown, without fear or shame, he followed Sandford into his chamber at the time of his retiring, and entreated him, with all the anxiety he suffered, to explain his allusion when he talked of a lover, and of insolence to Lady Matilda.

Sandford, seeing his emotion, was angry with himself that he had inadvertently mentioned the circumstance; and, putting on an air of surly importance, desired, if he had any business with him, that he would call in the morning.

Exasperated at so unexpected a reception, and at the pain of his disappointment, Rushbrook replied, "He treated him cruelly; nor would he stir out of the room till he had received a satisfactory answer to his question."

"Then bring your bed," replied Sandford; "for you must pass your whole night here."



He found it vain to think of obtaining any intelligence by threats. He therefore said, in a timid and persuasive manner—

“Did you, Mr. Sandford, hear Lady Matilda mention my name?”

“Yes,” replied Sandford, a little better reconciled to him.

“Did you tell her what I lately declared to you?” he asked, with still more diffidence.

“No,” replied Sandford.

“It is very well, Sir,” returned he, vexed to the heart, yet again wishing to soothe him.

“You certainly, Mr. Sandford, know what is for the best; yet I entreat you will give me some further account of the nobleman you named.”

“I know what is for the best,” replied Sandford; “and I won’t.”

Rushbrook bowed, and immediately left the room. He went apparently submissive; but the moment he shewed this submission, he took the resolution of paying a visit himself to the farm at which Lady Matilda resided; and of learning, either from Miss Woodley, the people of the house, the neighbours, or perhaps from Lady Matilda’s own lips, the secret which the obstinacy of Sandford had withheld.

He saw all the dangers of this undertaking; but none appeared so great as the danger of losing her he loved by the influence of a rival; and though Sandford had named “insolence,” he was in doubt whether what had appeared so to him was so in reality, or would be so considered by her.

To prevent the cause of his absence being suspected by Lord Elmwood, he immediately called his groom, ordered his horse, and, giving those servants concerned a strict charge of secrecy, with some frivolous pretence to apologize



for his not being present at breakfast (resolving to be back by dinner), he set off that night, and arrived at an inn about a mile from the farm at break of day.

The joy he felt when he found himself so near to the beloved object of his journey made him thank Sandford in his heart for the unkindness which had sent him thither. But new difficulties arose how to accomplish the end for which he came. He learned from the people of the inn that a lord, with a fine equipage, had visited at the farm; but who he was, or for what purpose he went, no one could inform him.

Dreading to return with his doubts unsatisfied, and yet afraid of proceeding to extremities that might be construed into presumption, he walked disconsolately (almost distractedly) across the fields, looking repeatedly at his watch, and wishing the time would stand still till he was ready to go back with his errand completed.

Every field he passed brought him nearer to the house on which his imagination was fixed; but how, without forfeiting every appearance of that respect which he so powerfully felt, could he attempt to enter it? He saw the indecorum, resolved not to be guilty of it, and yet walked on till he was within but a small orchard of the door. Could he then retreat? He wished he could; but he found that he had proceeded too far to be any longer master of himself. The time was urgent. He must either behold her and venture her displeasure, or, by diffidence during one moment, give up all his hopes, perhaps for ever.

With that same disregard to consequences which actuated him when he dared to supplicate Lord Elmwood on his daughter's behalf, he at length went eagerly to the door and rapped.

A servant came. He asked to "speak with Miss Woodley if she was quite alone."



He was shewn into an apartment, and Miss Woodley entered to him.

She started when she beheld who it was; but as he did not see a frown upon her face, he caught hold of her hand, and said persuasively—

“Do not be offended with me. If I mean to offend you, may I forfeit my life in atonement.”

Poor Miss Woodley, glad in her solitude to see any one from Elmwood House, forgot his visit was an offence till he put her in mind of it. She then said, with some reserve—

“Tell me the purport of your coming, Sir, and perhaps I may have no reason to complain.”

“It was to see Lady Matilda,” he replied, “or to hear of her health. It was to offer her my services—it was, Miss Woodley, to convince her, if possible, of my esteem.”

“Had you no other method, Sir?” said Miss Woodley, with the same reserve.

“None,” replied he, “or with joy I should have embraced it; and if you can inform me of any other, tell me, I beseech you, instantly, and I will immediately be gone and pursue your directions.”

Miss Woodley hesitated.

“You know of no other means, Miss Woodley?” he cried.

“And yet I cannot commend this,” said she.

“Nor do I. Do not imagine, because you see me here, that I approve of my visit; but, reduced to this necessity, pity the motives that have urged it.”

Miss Woodley did pity them; but as she would not own that she did, she could think of nothing else to say.

At this instant a bell rung from the chamber above.

“That is Lady Matilda’s bell,” said Miss Woodley. “She is coming to take a short walk. Do you wish to see her?”



Though it was the first wish of his heart, he paused, and said, "Will you plead my excuse?"

As the flight of stairs was but short which Matilda had to come down, she was in the room with Miss Woodley and Mr. Rushbrook just as that sentence ended.

She had stepped beyond the door of the apartment, when, perceiving a visitor, she hastily withdrew.

Rushbrook, animated, though trembling at her presence, cried, "Lady Matilda, do not avoid me till you know that I deserve such a punishment."

She immediately saw who it was, and returned back with a proper pride, and yet a proper politeness, in her manner.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said she; "I did not know you. I was afraid I intruded upon Miss Woodley and a stranger."

"You do not, then, consider me as a stranger, Lady Matilda? And that you do not requires my warmest acknowledgements."

She sat down, as if overcome by ill spirits and ill health.

Miss Woodley now asked Rushbrook to sit; for till now she had not.

"No, Madam," replied he, with confusion; "not unless Lady Matilda gives me permission."

She smiled, and pointed to a chair; and all the kindness which Rushbrook during his whole life had received from Lord Elmwood never inspired half the gratitude which this one instance of civility from his daughter excited.

He sat down with the confession of the obligation upon every feature of his face.

"I am not well, Mr. Rushbrook," said Matilda, languidly; "and you must excuse any want of etiquette at this house."

"While you excuse me, Madam, what can I have to complain of?"

She appeared absent while he was speaking, and, turning



to Miss Woodley, said, "Do you think I had better walk to-day?"

"No, my dear," answered Miss Woodley; "the ground is damp, and the air cold."

"You are not well, indeed, Lady Matilda," said Rushbrook, gazing upon her with the most tender respect.

She shook her head; and the tears, without any effort either to repel or to restrain them, ran down her face.

Rushbrook rose from his seat, and, with an accent and manner the most expressive, said, "We are cousins, Lady Matilda. In our infancy we were brought up together. We were beloved by the same mother, fostered by the same father——"

"Oh, oh!" cried she, interrupting him, with a tone which indicated the bitterest anguish.

"Nay, do not let me add to your uneasiness," he resumed "while I am attempting to alleviate it. Instruct me what I can do to shew my esteem and respect, rather than permit me, thus unguided, to rush upon what you may construe into insult and arrogance."

Miss Woodley went to Matilda, took her hand, then wiped the tears from her eyes, while Matilda reclined against her, entirely regardless of Rushbrook's presence.

"If I have been in the least instrumental to this sorrow——" said Rushbrook, with a face as much agitated as his mind.

"No," said Miss Woodley, in a low voice, "you have not——she is often thus."

"Yes," said Matilda, raising her head; "I am frequently so weak that I cannot resist the smallest incitement to grief. But do not make your visit long, Mr. Rushbrook," she continued; "for I was just then thinking, that should Lord Elmwood hear of this attention you have paid me, it might



be fatal to you." Here she wept again, as bitterly as before.

"There is no probability of his hearing of it, Madam," Rushbrook replied; "or if there were, I am persuaded that he would not resent it; for yesterday, when I am confident he knew that Mr. Sandford had been to see you, he received him on his return with unusual marks of kindness."

"Did he?" said she; and again she lifted up her head, her eyes for a moment beaming with hope and joy.

"There is something which we cannot yet define," said Rushbrook, "that Lord Elmwood struggles with; but when time shall have eradicated——"

Before he could proceed further, Matilda was once more sunk into despondency, and scarcely attended to what he was saying.

Miss Woodley, observing this, said, "Mr. Rushbrook, let it be a token we shall be glad to see you hereafter, that I now use the freedom to beg you will put an end to your visit."

"I withdraw, Madam," returned he, "with the warmest thanks for the reception you have given me; and this last assurance of your kindness is beyond any other favour you could have bestowed. Lady Matilda," added he, "suffer me to take your hand at parting, and let it be a testimony that you acknowledge me for a relation."

She put out her hand, which he knelt to receive, but did not raise it to his lips. He held the boon too sacred; and looking earnestly upon it, as it lay pale and wan in his, he breathed one sigh over it, and withdrew.



## CHAPTER L.

SORROWFUL and affecting as this interview had been, Rushbrook, as he rode home, reflected upon it with the most inordinate delight; and had he not seen decline of health in the looks and behaviour of Lady Matilda his felicity had been unbounded. Entranced in the happiness of her society, the thought of his rival never came once to his mind while he was with her: a want of recollection, however, he by no means regretted, as her whole appearance contradicted every suspicion he could possibly entertain, that she favoured the addresses of any man living; and had he remembered, he would not have dared to name the subject.

The time ran so swiftly while he was away, that it was beyond the dinner hour at Elmwood House when he returned. Heated, his dress and his hair disordered, he entered the dining-room just as the desert was put upon the table. He was confounded at his own appearance, and at the falsehoods he should be obliged to fabricate in his excuse: there was yet that which engaged his attention, beyond any circumstance relating to himself—the features of Lord Elmwood—of which his daughter's, whom he had just beheld, had the most striking resemblance; though hers were softened by sorrow, while his were made austere by the self-same cause.

“Where have you been?” said his uncle, with a frown.



"A chase, my Lord—I beg your pardon—but a pack of dogs I unexpectedly met." For in the hackneyed art of lying without injury to any one, Rushbrook, to his shame, was proficient.

His excuses were received, and the subject ceased.

During his absence that day Lord Elmwood had called Sandford apart, and said to him, that as the malevolence which he once observed between him and Rushbrook had, he perceived, subsided, he advised him, if he was a well-wisher to the young man, to sound his heart, and counsel him not to act against the will of his nearest relation and friend. "I myself am too hasty," continued Lord Elmwood; "and, unhappily, too much determined upon what I have once (though, perhaps, rashly) said, to speak upon a topic where it is probable I shall meet with opposition. You, Sandford, can reason with moderation. For after all that I have done for my nephew, it would be a pity to forsake him at last; and yet, that is but too likely, if he should provoke me to it."

"Sir," replied Sandford, "I will speak to him."

"Yet," added Lord Elmwood sternly, "do not urge what you say for my sake, but for his own: I can part from him with ease, but he may then repent; and, you know, repentance always comes too late with me."

"My Lord, I will exert all the efforts in my power for his welfare. But what is the subject on which he has refused to comply with your desires?"

"Matrimony—have not I told you?"

"Not a word."

"I wish him to marry, that I may then conclude the deeds in respect to my estate; and the only child of Sir William Winterton (a rich heiress) was the wife I meant to propose; but from his indifference to all I have said on the occasion, I have not yet mentioned her name to him—you may."



"I will, my Lord, and use all my persuasion to engage his obedience; and you shall have, at least, a faithful account of what he says."

Sandford the next morning sought an opportunity of being alone with Rushbrook. He then plainly repeated to him what Lord Elmwood had said, and saw him listen to it all, and heard him answer it all with the most tranquil resolution, "That he would do anything to preserve the friendship and patronage of his uncle—but marry."

"What can be your reason?" asked Sandford, though he guessed.

"A reason I cannot give to Lord Elmwood."

"Then do not give it to me, for I have promised to tell him everything you shall say to me."

"And everything I *have* said?" asked Rushbrook, hastily.

"As to what you have said, I don't know whether it has made impression enough on my memory to enable me to repeat it.

"I am glad it has not."

"And my answer to your uncle is to be, simply, that you will not obey him."

"I should hope, Mr. Sandford, that you would express it in better terms."

"Tell me the terms, and I will be exact."

Rushbrook struck his forehead, and walked about the room.

"Am I to give him any reason for your disobeying him?"

"I tell you again that I dare not name the cause."

"Then why do you submit to a power you are ashamed to own?"

"I am not ashamed—I glory in it. Are you ashamed of your esteem for Lady Matilda?"



"Oh! if she is the cause of your disobedience, be assured I shall not mention it; for I am forbid to name her."

"And surely, as that is the case, I need not fear to speak plainly to you. I love Lady Matilda; or, perhaps, unacquainted with love, what I feel may be only pity; and if so, pity is the most pleasing passion that ever possessed a human heart, and I would not change it for all her father's estates."

"Pity, then, gives rise to very different sensations; for I pity you, and that sensation I would gladly exchange for approbation."

"If you really feel compassion for me, and I believe you do, contrive some means by your answers to Lord Elmwood to pacify him, without involving me in ruin. Hint at my affections being engaged, but not to whom; and add, that I have given my word, if he will allow me a short time, a year or two only, I will, during that period, try to disengage them, and use all my power to render myself worthy of the union for which he designs me."

"And this is not only your solemn promise, but your fixed determination."

"Nay, why will you search my heart to the bottom, when the surface ought to content you?"

"If you cannot resolve on what you have proposed, why do you ask this time of your uncle? For should he allow it you, your disobedience at the expiration will be less pardonable than it is now?"

"Within a year, Mr. Sandford, who can tell what strange events may not occur to change all our prospects? Even my passion may decline."

"In that expectation, then, the failure of which yourself must answer for, I will repeat as much of this discourse as shall be proper."



Here Rushbrook communicated his having been to see Lady Matilda ; for which Sandford reproved him, but in less rigorous terms than he generally used in his reproofs ; and Rushbrook, by his entreaties, now gained the intelligence who the nobleman was who addressed Matilda, and on what views ; but was restrained to patience by Sandford's arguments and threats.

Upon the subject of this marriage Sandford met his patron, without having determined exactly what to say, but rested on the temper in which he should find him.

At the commencement of the conversation he told him, "Rushbrook begged for time."

"I have given him time—have I not?" cried Lord Elmwood : "what can be the meaning of his thus trifling with me!"

Sandford replied, "My Lord, young men are frequently romantic in their notions of love, and think it impossible to have a sincere affection where their own inclinations do not first point out the choice."

"If he is in love," answered Lord Elmwood, "let him take the object, and leave my house and me for ever. Nor under this destiny can he have any claim to pity ; for genuine love will make him happy in banishment, in poverty, or in sickness : it makes the poor man happy as the rich, the fool blest as the wise." The sincerity with which Lord Elmwood had loved was expressed, as he said this, more than in words.

"Your Lordship is talking," replied Sandford, "of the passion in its most refined and predominant sense, while I may possibly be speaking of a mere phantom that has led this young man astray."

"Whatever it be," returned Lord Elmwood, "let him and his friends weigh the case well, and act for the best—so shall I."



"His friends, my Lord! What friends, or what friend has he upon earth but you?"

"Then why will he not submit to my advice, or himself give me a proper reason why he cannot?"

• "Because there may be friendship without familiarity; and so it is between him and you."

"That cannot be; for I have condescended to talk to him in the most familiar terms."

"To condescend, my Lord, is *not* to be familiar."

"Then come, Sir, let us be on an equal footing through you. And now speak out *his* thoughts freely, and hear mine in return."

"Why, then, he begs a respite for a year or two."

"On what pretence?"

"To me, it was preference of a single life: but I suspect it is, what he imagines to be, love, and for some object whom he thinks your Lordship would disapprove."

"He has not, then, actually confessed this to you?"

"If he has, it was drawn from him by such means, that I am not warranted to say it in direct words."

"I have entered into no contract, no agreement on his account, with the friends of the lady I have pointed out," said Lord Elmwood: "nothing beyond implications have passed betwixt her family and myself at present; and if the person on whom he has fixed his affections should not be in a situation absolutely contrary to my wishes, I may, perhaps, confirm his choice."

That moment Sandford's courage prompted him to name Lady Matilda, but his discretion opposed. However, in the various changes of his countenance from the conflict, it was plain to discern that he wished to say more than he dared.

On which Lord Elmwood cried—

"Speak on, Sandford; what are you afraid of?"



"Of you, my Lord."

He started.

Sandford went on: "I know no tie, no bond, no innocence, that is a protection when you feel resentment."

"You are right," he replied, significantly.

"Then how, my Lord, can you encourage me to *speake* on, when that which I perhaps should say might offend you to hear?"

"To what, and whither are you changing our subject?" cried Lord Elmwood. "But, Sir, if you know my resentful and relentless temper, you surely know how to shun it."

"Not, and speak plainly."

"Then dissemble."

"No, I'll not do that ; but I'll be silent."

"A new parade of submission. You are more tormenting to me than any one I have about me ; constantly on the verge of disobeying my orders, that you may recede, and gain my good-will by your forbearance. But know, Mr. Sandford, that I will not suffer this much longer. If you choose in every conversation we have together (though the most remote from such a topic) to think of my daughter, you must either banish your thoughts, or conceal them ; nor by one sign, one item, remind me of her."

"Your daughter did you call her ? Can you call yourself her father ?"

"I do, Sir : but I was likewise the husband of her mother ; and, as that husband, I solemnly swear——" He was proceeding with violence.

"Oh, my Lord," cried Sandford, interrupting him, with his hands clasped in the most fervent supplication—"oh, do not let me draw upon her one oath more of your eternal displeasure. I'll kneel to beg that you will drop the subject."

The inclination he made, with his knees bent towards the



ground, stopped Lord Elmwood instantly. But though it broke in upon his words it did not alter one angry look : his eyes darted, and his lips trembled with indignation.

Sandford, in order to appease him, bowed and offered to withdraw, hoping to be recalled. He wished in vain : Lord Elmwood's eyes followed him to the door, expressive of the joy he should receive from his absence.



## CHAPTER LI.

THE companions and counsellors of Lord Margrave, who had so prudently advised gentle methods in the pursuit of his passion, while there was left any hope of their success, now, convinced there was none, as strenuously recommended open violence:—and sheltered under the consideration that it was to be practised upon a defenceless woman, who had not one protector, except an old priest, the subject of their ridicule;—assured, likewise, from the influence of Lord Margrave's wealth, that all inferior consequences could be overborne, they saw no room for fears on any side; and what they wished to execute, they with care and skill premeditated.

When their scheme was mature for performance, three of his chosen companions, and three servants, trained in all the villanous exploits of their masters, set off for the habitation of poor Matilda, and arrived there about the twilight of the evening.

Near four hours after that time (just as the family were going to bed), they came up to the doors of the house, and, rapping violently, gave the alarm of fire, conjuring all the inhabitants to make their way out immediately, as they would save their lives.

The family consisted of few persons, all of whom ran instantly to the doors, and opened them; on which two men rushed in, and, with the plea of saving Lady Matilda from the pretended flames, caught her in their arms, and carried



her off; while all the deceived people of the house, running eagerly to save themselves, paid no regard to her; till, looking for the cause for which they had been terrified, they perceived the stratagem, and the fatal consequences.

Amidst the complaints, the sorrow, and the affright of the people of the farm, Miss Woodley's sensations wanted a name. Terror and anguish give but a faint description of what she suffered: something like the approach of death stole over her senses, and she sat like one petrified with horror. She had no doubt who was the perpetrator of this wickedness; but how was she to follow—how effect a rescue?

The circumstances of this event, as soon as the people had time to call up their recollection, were sent to a neighbouring magistrate; but little could be hoped from that. Who was to swear to the robber? Who undertake to find him out? Miss Woodley thought of Rushbrook—of Sandford—of Lord Elmwood; but what could she hope from the want of power in the two former?—what from the latter for the want of will? Now stupified, and now distracted, she walked about the house incessantly, begging for instructions how to act, or how to forget her misery.

A tenant of Lord Elmwood's, who occupied a little farm near to that at which Lady Matilda lived, and who was well acquainted with the whole history of her and her mother's misfortunes, was returning from a neighbouring fair just as this inhuman plan was put in execution. He heard the cries of a woman in distress, and followed the sound, till he arrived at a chaise in waiting, and saw Matilda placed in it, by the side of two men, who presented pistols to him as he offered to approach and expostulate.

The farmer, though uncertain who this female was, yet



went to the house she had been taken from (as the nearest) with the tale of what he had seen ; and there being informed it was Lady Matilda whom he had beheld, this intelligence, joined to the powerful effect her screams had on him, made him resolve to take horse immediately, and, with some friends, follow the carriage till they should trace the place to which she was conveyed.

The anxiety, the firmness discovered in determining upon this undertaking, somewhat alleviated the agony Miss Woodley endured ; and she began to hope timely assistance might yet be given to her beloved charge.

The man set out, meaning at all events to attempt her release ; but before he had proceeded far, the few friends that accompanied him began to reflect on the improbability of their success against a nobleman, surrounded by servants, with other attendants likewise, and, perhaps, even countenanced by the father of the lady, whom they presumed to take from him : or if not, while Lord Elmwood beheld the offence with indifference, that indifference gave it a sanction they might in vain oppose. These cool reflections tending to their safety, had their weight with the companions of the farmer : they all rode back, rejoicing at their second thoughts, and left him to pursue his journey, and prove his valour by himself.



## CHAPTER LII.

IT was not with Sandford as it had lately been with Rushbrook, under the displeasure of Lord Elmwood: to the latter he behaved, as soon as their dissension was past, as if it had never happened. But to Sandford it was otherwise: the resentment which he had repressed at the time of the offence lurked in his heart, and dwelt upon his mind for several days; during which he carefully avoided exchanging a word with him, and gave other demonstrations of being still in enmity.

Sandford, though experienced in the cruelty and ingratitude of the world, yet could not, without difficulty, brook this severity, this contumely, from a man for whose welfare, ever since his infancy, he had laboured; and whose happiness was more dear to him, in spite of all his faults, than that of any other person. Even Lady Matilda was not so dear to Sandford as her father; and he loved her more that she was Lord Elmwood's child, than for any other cause.

Sometimes the old priest, incensed beyond bearing, was on the point of saying to his patron, "How, in his age, dare you thus treat the man whom, in his youth, you respected and revered?"

Sometimes, instead of anger, he felt the tear, he was ashamed to own, steal to his eye, and even fall down his



cheek. Sometimes he left the room half determined to leave the house; but these were all half determinations, for he knew him with whom he had to deal too well not to know that he might be provoked into yet greater anger; and that should he once rashly quit his house, the doors, most probably, would be shut against him for ever.

In this humiliating state, (for even the domestics could not but observe their Lord's displeasure), Sandford passed three days, and was beginning the fourth, when, sitting with Lord Elmwood and Rushbrook just after breakfast, a servant entered, saying, as he opened the door, to somebody who followed, "You must wait till you have my Lord's permission."

This attracted their eyes to the door, and a man meanly dressed walked in, following close to the servant.

The latter turned, and seemed again to desire the person to retire, but in vain; he rushed forward, regardless of his opposer, and in great agitation, said—

"My Lord, if you please, I have business with you, provided you will choose to be alone."

Lord Elmwood, struck with the intruder's earnestness, bade the servant leave the room, and then said to the stranger—

"You may speak before these gentlemen."

The man instantly turned pale, and trembled—then, to prolong the time before he spoke, went to the door to see if it was shut—returned—yet, still trembling, seemed unwilling to say his errand.

"What have you done," cried Lord Elmwood, "that you are in this terror? What have you done, man?"

"Nothing, my Lord," replied he; "but I am afraid I am going to offend you."

"Well, no matter," he answered carelessly; "only go on, and let me know your business."



The man's distress increased; and he replied, in a voice of grief and affright, "Your child, my Lord——"

Rushbrook and Sandford started; and looking at Lord Elmwood, saw him turn white as death. In a tremulous voice he instantly cried—

"What of her?" and rose from his seat.

Encouraged by the question, and the agitation of him who asked it, the poor man gave way to his feelings, and answered with every sign of sorrow—

"I saw her, my Lord, taken away by force: two ruffians seized and carried her away, while she screamed in vain to me for help, and looked like one in distraction."

"Man, what do you mean?" cried the Earl.

"Lord Margrave," replied the stranger, "we have no doubt, has formed this plot: he has for some time past beset the house where she lived; and, when his visits were refused, he threatened this. Besides, one of his servants attended the carriage: I saw and knew him."

Lord Elmwood listened to the last part of this account with seeming composure: then, turning hastily to Rushbrook, he said—

"Where are my pistols, Harry?"

Sandford forgot, at this instant, all the anger that had passed between him and the Earl: he rushed towards him, and, grasping his hand, cried, "Will you then prove yourself a father?"

Lord Elmwood only answered, "Yes," and left the room.

Rushbrook followed, and begged with all the earnestness he felt, to be permitted to accompany his uncle:—While Sandford shook hands with the farmer a thousand times; and he, in his turn, rejoiced, as if he had already seen Lady Matilda restored to liberty.

Rushbrook in vain entreated Lord Elmwood: he laid his



commands upon him not to go a step from the castle ; while the agitation of his own mind was too great to observe the rigour of this sentence on his nephew.

During hasty preparations for the Earl's departure, Sandford received from Miss Woodley the sad intelligence of what had occurred ; but he returned an answer to recompense her for all she had suffered on the sad occasion.

Within a short hour Lord Elmwood set off, accompanied by his guide, the farmer, and other attendants, furnished with every requisite to ensure the success of their enterprise ; while poor Matilda little thought of a deliverer nigh, much less that her deliverer should prove her father.



## CHAPTER LIII.

LORD MARGRAVE, black as this incident of his life must make him appear to the reader, still nursed in his conscience a reserve of specious virtue, to keep him in peace with himself. It was his design to plead, to argue, to implore, nay, even to threaten, long before he put his threats in force; and with this and the following reflection he reconciled—as most bad men can—what he had done, not only to the laws of humanity, but to the laws of honour:—

“I have stolen a woman, certainly,” said he to himself, “but I will make her happier than she was in that humble state from which I have taken her. I will even,” said he, “now that she is in my power, win her affections; and when, in fondness hereafter she hangs upon me, how will she thank me for this little trial, through which I shall have conducted her to happiness!”

Thus did he hush his remorse, while he waited impatiently at home in expectation of his prize.

Half expiring with her sufferings, of body as well as of mind, about twelve o'clock the next night after she was borne away, Matilda arrived,—and felt her spirits revive by the superior sufferings that awaited her; for her increasing terrors roused her from the deathlike weakness brought on by extreme fatigue.

Lord Margrave's house, to which he had gone previous to this occasion, was situated in the lonely part of a well-known



forest, not more than twenty miles distant from London. This was an estate he rarely visited; and as he had but few servants here, it was a spot which he supposed would be less the object of suspicion in the present case than any other of his seats. To this, then, Lady Matilda was conveyed, a superb apartment allotted her, and one of his confidential females placed to attend upon her person, with all respect and assurances of safety.

Matilda looked in this woman's face, and, seeing she bore the features of her sex, while her own knowledge reached none of those worthless characters of which this creature was a specimen, she imagined that none of those could look as she did, and therefore found consolation in her seeming tenderness. She was even prevailed upon (by her promises to sit by her side and watch) to throw herself on a bed, and suffer sleep for a few minutes—for sleep to her was suffering; her fears giving birth to dreams terrifying as her waking thoughts.

More wearied than refreshed with her sleep, she rose at break of day; and, refusing to admit of the change of an article in her dress, she persisted to wear the torn, disordered habiliment in which she had been dragged away; nor would she taste a morsel of all the delicacies that were prepared for her.

Her attendant for some time observed the most reverential awe; but finding this humility had not the effect of gaining compliance with her advice, she varied her manners, and began by less submissive means to attempt an influence. She said her orders were to be obedient, while she herself was obeyed—at least in circumstances so material as the lady's health, of which she had the charge as a physician, and expected equal compliance from her patient. Food and fresh apparel she prescribed as the only means to prevent death; and even threatened her invalid with something



worse—a visit from Lord Margrave—if she continued obstinate.

Now loathing her for the deception she had practised more than had she received her thus at first, Matilda hid her eyes from the sight of her; and, when she was obliged to look, she shuddered.

This female at length thought it her duty to wait upon her worthy employer, and inform him the young lady in her trust would certainly die, unless there were some means employed to oblige her to take some nourishment.

Lord Margrave, glad of an opportunity that might apologize for his intrusion upon Lady Matilda, went with eagerness to her apartment, and, throwing himself at her feet, conjured her, if she would save his life, as well as her own, to submit to be consoled.

The extreme aversion, the horror which his presence inspired, caused Matilda for a moment to forget all her want of power, her want of health, her weakness; and, rising from the place where she sat, she cried, with her voice elevated—

“Leave me, my Lord, or I’ll die in spite of all your care. I’ll instantly expire with grief if you do not leave me.”

Accustomed to the tears and reproaches of the sex, though not of those like her, he treated with indifference these menaces of anger, and, seizing her hand, carried it to his lips.

Enraged, and overwhelmed with terror at the affront, she exclaimed, forgetting every other friend she had, “Oh, my dear Miss Woodley, why are you not here to protect me?”

“Nay,” returned Lord Margrave, stifling a propensity to laugh, “I should think the old priest would be as good a champion as the lady.”

The remembrance of Sandford, with all his kindness, now rushed so forcibly on Matilda’s mind, that she shed tears,



from the certainty how much he felt, and would continue to feel, for her situation. Once she thought on Rushbrook, and thought even *he* would be sorry for her. Of her father she did not think—she dared not: one single moment, indeed, that thought had intruded; but she hurried it away—it was too bitter.

It was now again quite night, and near to that hour when she came first to the house. Lord Margrave, though at some distance from her, remained still in her apartment, while her female companion had stolen away. His insensibility to her lamentations, the agitated looks he sometimes cast upon her, her weak and defenceless state, all conspired to fill her mind with increasing horror.

He saw her apprehensions in her distracted face, dishevelled hair, and the whole of her forlorn appearance; yet, in spite of his former resolutions, he did not resist the wish of fulfilling all her dreadful expectations.

He once again approached her, and again was going to seize her hand, when the report of a pistol, and a confused noise of persons assembling towards the door of the apartment, caused him to desist.

He started, but looked more surprised than alarmed. *Her* alarm was augmented; for she supposed this tumult was some experiment to intimidate her into submission. She wrung her hands and lifted up her eyes to Heaven in the last agony of despair, when one of Lord Margrave's servants entered hastily and announced—

“Lord Elmwood!”

That moment her father entered, and, with all the unrestrained fondness of a parent, folded her in his arms.

Her extreme, her excess of joy on such a meeting, and from such anguish rescued, was, in part, repressed by his awful presence. The apprehensions to which she had been accustomed kept her timid and doubtful. She feared to



speaking, or clasp him in return for his embrace, but, falling on her knees, clung round his legs, and bathed his feet with her tears. These were the happiest moments that she had ever known—perhaps the happiest *he* had ever known.

Lord Margrave, on whom Lord Elmwood had not even cast a look, now left the room; but, as he quitted it, called out—

“My Lord Elmwood, if you have any demands on me——”

The Earl interrupted him: “Would you make me an executioner? The law shall be your only antagonist.”

Matilda, quite exhausted, yet upheld by the sudden transport she had felt, was led by her father out of this wretched dwelling—more despicable than the hovel of the veriest beggar.



## CHAPTER LIV.

OVERCOME with the want of rest for two nights, through her distracting fears, and all those fears now hushed, Matilda, soon after she was placed in the carriage with Lord Elmwood, dropped fast asleep; and thus, insensibly surprised, she leaned her head against her father in the sweetest slumber the imagination can conceive.

When she awoke, instead of the usual melancholy scene before her view, she beheld her father; and heard the voice of the once dreaded Lord Elmwood, tenderly saying—

“We will go no further to-night: the fatigue is too much for her. Order beds here directly, and some proper person to sit up and attend her.”

She could only turn to him with a look of love and duty: her lips could not utter a sentence.

In the morning she found her father by the side of her bed. He inquired “if she was in health sufficient to pursue her journey, or if she would remain at the inn where she was.”

“I am able to go with you,” she answered instantly.

“Nay,” replied he, “perhaps you ought to stay here till you are perfectly recovered.”

“I *am* recovered,” said she, “and ready to go with you,” fearful that he meant to separate from her, as he had ever done.

He perceived her fears and replied—



"Nay, if you stay, I shall do the same—and, when I go, shall take you with me to my house."

"To Elmwood House?" she asked, eagerly.

"No, to my house in town, where I intend to be all the winter, and where you shall still continue under my care."

She turned her face on the pillow to conceal tears of joy, but her sobs revealed them.

"Come," said he, "this kiss is a token you have nothing to dread. I shall send for Miss Woodley, too, immediately," continued he.

"Oh, I shall be overjoyed to see her, my Lord—and to see Mr. Sandford—and even Mr. Rushbrook."

"Do you know *him*?" said Lord Elmwood.

"I have seen him two or three times."

The Earl, hoping the air might be a means of re-establishing her health and spirits, now left the room, and ordered his carriage to be prepared, while she arose, attended by one of his female servants, for whom he had sent to town, to bring such changes of apparel as were requisite.

When Matilda was ready to join her father in the next room, she felt a tremour seize her, that made it almost impossible to appear before him. No other circumstance now impending to agitate her heart, she felt more forcibly its embarrassment at meeting, on terms of easy intercourse, him of whom she had never been used to think but with that distant reverence and fear which his severity had excited; and she knew not how she should dare to speak to or look on him with that freedom which her affection warranted.

After many efforts to conquer these nice and refined sensations, but to no purpose, she at last went to his apartment. He was reading; but, as she entered, he put out his hand and drew her to him. Her tears wholly overcame her. He could have intermingled his : but assuming



a grave countenance, he entreated her to desist from exhausting her spirits; and, after a few powerful struggles, she obeyed.

Before the morning was over, she experienced the extreme joy of sitting by her father's side as they drove to town, and of receiving, during his conversation, a thousand intimations of his love, and tokens of her lasting happiness.

It was now the middle of November; and yet, as Matilda passed along, never to her did the sun shine so brightly as upon this morning—never did her imagination comprehend that the human heart could feel happiness true and genuine as hers.

On arriving at the house, there was no abatement of her felicity: all was respect and duty on the part of the domestics—all paternal care on the part of Lord Elmwood; and she would have been at that summit of her wishes which annihilates hope, but that the prospect of seeing Miss Woodley and Mr. Sandford still kept this passion in existence.



## CHAPTER LV.

RUSHBROOK was detained at Elmwood House during all this time, more by the persuasions, nay, prayers of Sandford, than the commands of Lord Elmwood. He had, but for Sandford, followed his uncle, and exposed himself to his anger, sooner than have endured the most piercing inquietude which he was doomed to suffer till the news arrived of Lady Matilda's safety. He, indeed, had little else to fear, from the known firm, courageous character of her father, and the expedition with which he undertook his journey; but lovers' fears are like those of women, obstinate: and no argument could persuade either him or Miss Woodley (who had now ventured to come to Elmwood House), but that Matilda's peace of mind might be for ever destroyed before she was rescued from her danger.

The summons from Lord Elmwood for their coming to town, was received by each of this party with delight; but the impatience to obey it was, in Rushbrook, so violent, it was painful to himself, and extremely troublesome to Sandford, who wished, from his regard to Lady Matilda, rather to delay than hurry their journey.

"You are to blame," said he to him and Miss Woodley, "to wish, by your arrival, to divide with Lord Elmwood that tender bond which ties the good, who confer obligations, to the object of their benevolence. At present there is no one with him to share in the care and protection of his



daughter, and he is under the necessity of discharging that duty himself: this habit may become so powerful, that he *cannot* throw it off, even if his former resolutions should urge him to it. While we remain here, therefore, Lady Matilda is safe with her father; but it would not surprise me, if, on our arrival (especially if we are precipitate) he should place her again with Miss Woodley at a distance."

To this forcible conjecture they submitted for a few days, and then most gladly set out for town.

On their arrival, they were met, even at the street door, by Lady Matilda; and, with an expression of joy they did not suppose her features could have worn, she embraced Miss Woodley! hung upon Sandford!—and to Mr. Rushbrook, who, from his conscious love, only bowed at a humble distance, she held out her hand, with every look and gesture of the tenderest esteem.

When Lord Elmwood joined them he welcomed them all sincerely; but Sandford more than the rest, with whom he had not spoken for many days before he left the country, for his allusion to the wretched situation of his daughter—and Sandford (with his fellow-travellers) now saw him treat that daughter with an easy, a natural fondness, as if she had lived with him from her infancy. He appeared, however, at times, under the apprehension that the propensity of man to jealousy, might give Rushbrook a pang at this dangerous rival in his love and fortune. For though Lord Elmwood remembered well the hazard on which he had once ventured to befriend Matilda, yet the present unlimited reconciliation was something so unlooked for, it might be a trial too much for his generosity. Slight as was this suspicion, it did Rushbrook injustice. He loved Lady Matilda too sincerely, he loved her father's happiness and her mother's memory too faithfully, not to be rejoiced at all he witnessed; nor could the secret hope that whispered him, "their blessings might



one day be mutual," increase the pleasure he found in beholding Matilda happy.

Unexpected affairs, in which Lord Elmwood had been for some time engaged, had diverted his attention for a while from the marriage of his nephew; nor did he at this time find his disposition sufficiently severe to exact from the young man a compliance with his wishes at so cruel an alternative as that of being for ever discarded. He felt his mind, by the late incident, too much softened for such harshness; he yet wished for the alliance he had proposed; for he was more consistent in his character than to suffer the tenderness his daughter's peril had awakened to derange those plans which he had long projected. Never, even now, for a moment, did he indulge—for, perhaps, it would have been an indulgence—the design of replacing her exactly in the rights of her birth, to the disappointment of all his nephew's expectations.

Yet, milder at this crisis in his temper than he had been for years before, and knowing he could be no longer irritated upon the subject of neglect to his child, he at length once more resolved to trust himself in a conference with Rushbrook on the plan of his marriage; meaning at the same time to mention Matilda as an opponent from whom he had nothing to fear. But, for some time before Rushbrook was called to this private audience, he had, by his unwearied attention, endeavoured to impress upon Matilda's mind the softest sentiments in his favour. He succeeded—but not so fully as he wished. She loved him as her friend, her cousin, her foster-brother, but not as a lover. The idea of love never once came to her thoughts; and she would sport with Rushbrook like the most harmless infant, while he, all impassioned, could with difficulty resist disclosing to her what she made him suffer.

At the meeting between him and Lord Elmwood, to which



he was called for his final answer on that subject, which had once nearly proved so fatal to him ; after a thousand fears, much confusion and embarrassment, he at length frankly confessed his "heart was engaged, and had been so long before his uncle offered to direct his choice."

Lord Elmwood, as he had done formerly, desired to know "on whom he had placed his affections."

"I dare not tell you, my Lord," returned he ; "but Mr. Sandford can witness their sincerity, and how long they have been fixed."

"Fixed !" cried the Earl.

"Immovably fixed, my Lord ; and yet the object is as unconscious of my love to this moment as you yourself have been ; and I swear ever shall be so, without your permission."

"Name the object," said Lord Elmwood, anxiously.

"My Lord, I dare not. The last time I named her to you, you threatened to abandon me for my arrogance."

Lord Elmwood started—"My daughter!—Would you marry her?"

"But with your approbation, my Lord ; and that——"

Before he could proceed a word further, his uncle left the room hastily ; and left Rushbrook all terror for his approaching fate.

Lord Elmwood went immediately into the apartment where Sandford, Miss Woodley, and Matilda were sitting, and cried with an angry voice, and with his countenance disordered—

"Rushbrook has offended me beyond all forgiveness. Go, Sandford, to the library, where he is, and tell him this instant to quit my house, and never dare to return."

Miss Woodley lifted up her hands and sighed.

Sandford rose slowly from his seat to execute the office ;—

While Lady Matilda, who was arranging her music books



upon the instrument, stopped from her employment suddenly, and held her handkerchief to her eyes.

A general silence ensued, till Lord Elmwood, resuming his angry tone, cried, "Did you hear me, Mr. Sandford?"

Sandford now, without a word in reply, made for the door; but there Matilda impeded him, and, throwing her arms about his neck, cried—

"Dear Mr. Sandford, do not."

"How!" exclaimed her father.

She saw the impending frown, and, rushing towards him, took his hand fearfully, and knelt at his feet. "Mr. Rushbrook is my relation," she cried in a pathetic voice, "my companion, my friend: before you loved me he was anxious for my happiness, and often visited me to lament with and console me. I cannot see him turned out of your house without feeling for *him* what he once felt for *me*."

Lord Elmwood turned aside to conceal his sensations; then, raising her from the floor, he said, "Do you know what he has asked of me?"

"No," answered she in the utmost ignorance, and with the utmost innocence painted on her face; "but whatever it is, my Lord, though you do not grant it, yet pardon him for asking."

"Perhaps *you* would grant him what he has requested?" said her father.

"Most willingly—were it in my gift."

"It is," replied he. "Go to him in the library, and hear what he has to say; for on your will his fate shall depend."

Like lightning she flew out of the room; while even the grave Sandford smiled at the idea of their meeting.

Rushbrook, with his fears all verified by the manner in which his uncle had left him, sat with his head reclined



against a bookcase, and every limb extended with the despair that had seized him.

Matilda nimbly opened the door and cried, "Mr. Rushbrook, I am come to comfort you."

"That you have always done," said he, rising in rapture to receive her, even in the midst of all his sadness.

"What is it you want?" said she. "What have you asked of my father, that he has denied you?"

"I have asked for that," replied he, "which is dearer to me than my life."

"Be satisfied, then," returned she; "for you shall have it."

"Dear Matilda! it is not in your power to bestow."

"But he has told me it *shall* be in my power; and has desired me to give or to refuse it you, at my own pleasure."

"O Heavens?" cried Rushbrook in transport, "has he?"

"He has, indeed—before Mr. Sandford and Miss Woodley. Now tell me what you petitioned for."

"I asked him," cried Rushbrook, trembling, "for a wife."

Her hand, which had just then taken hold of his, in the warmth of her wish to serve him, now dropped down as with the stroke of death—her face lost its colour—and she leaned against the desk by which they were standing without uttering a word.

"What means this change?" said he. "Do you not wish me happy?"

"Yes," she exclaimed, "Heaven is my witness; but it gives me concern to think we must part."

"Then let us be joined," cried he, falling at her feet, "till death alone can part us."

All the sensibility—the reserve—the pride, with which she was so amply possessed, returned to her that moment. She started back, and cried, "Could Lord Elmwood know for what he sent me?"



“He did,” replied Rushbrook : “I boldly told him of my presumptuous love; and he has given to you alone the power over my happiness or misery. Oh, do not doom me to the latter.”

Whether the heart of Matilda, such as it has been described, *could* sentence him to misery, the reader is left to surmise; and if he supposes that it could *not*, he has every reason to suppose that their wedded life was—a life of happiness.

He has beheld the pernicious effects of an *improper education* in the destiny which attended the unthinking Miss Milner. On the opposite side, what may not be hoped from that school of prudence, though of adversity, in which Matilda was bred.

And Mr. Milner, Matilda’s grandfather, had better have given his *fortune* to a distant branch of his family, as Matilda’s father once meant to do, so that he had given to his daughter

A PROPER EDUCATION.

THE END.



# NATURE AND ART.

(FIRST PUBLISHED 1796.)

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## CHAPTER I.

AT a time when the nobility of Britain were said by the poet laureate, to be the admirers and protectors of the arts, and were acknowledged by the whole nation to be the patrons of music, William and Henry, youths under twenty years of age, brothers, and the sons of a country shop-keeper who had lately died insolvent, set out on foot for London, in the hope of procuring by their industry a scanty subsistence.

As they walked out of their native town, each with a small bundle at his back, each observed the other drop several tears; but, upon the sudden meeting of their eyes, they both smiled with a degree of disdain at the weakness in which they had been caught.

"I am sure," said William (the elder), "I don't know what makes me cry."

"Nor I neither," said Henry; "for though we may never see this town again, yet we leave nothing behind us to give us reason to lament."

"No," replied William, "nor anybody who cares what becomes of us."

"But I was thinking," said Henry, now weeping bitterly,



"that if my poor father were alive, *he* would care what was to become of us: he would not have suffered us to begin this long journey without a few more shillings in our pockets."

At the end of this sentence, William, who had with some effort suppressed his tears while his brother spoke, now uttered, with a voice almost inarticulate,—“Don't say any more; don't talk any more about it. My father used to tell us, that when he was gone we must take care of ourselves; and so we must. I only wish,” continued he, giving way to his grief, “that I had never done anything to offend him while he was living.”

“That is what I wish too,” cried Henry. “If I had always been dutiful to him while he was alive, I would not shed one tear for him now that he is gone: but I would thank Heaven that he had escaped from his creditors.”

In conversation such as this, wherein their sorrow for their deceased parent seemed less for his death than because he had not been so happy when living, as they ought to have made him; and wherein their own outcast fortune was less the subject of their grief than the reflection, what their father would have endured, could he have beheld them in their present situation:—in conversation such as this, they pursued their journey till they arrived at that metropolis which has received for centuries past, from the provincial towns, the bold adventurer of every denomination; has stamped his character with experience and example; and while it has bestowed on some, coronets and mitres—on some, the lasting fame of genius—to others, has dealt beggary, infamy, and untimely death.



## CHAPTER II.

AFTER three weeks passed in London, a year followed, during which William and Henry never sat down to a dinner, or went into a bed, without hearts glowing with thankfulness to that Providence who had bestowed on them such unexpected blessings; for they no longer presumed to expect (what still they hoped they deserved) a secure pittance in this world of plenty. Their experience, since they came to town, had informed them, that to obtain a permanent livelihood is the good fortune but of a part of those who are in want of it; and the precarious earning of half-a-crown, or a shilling, in the neighbourhood where they lodged, by an errand, or some such accidental means, was the sole support which they at present enjoyed.

They had sought for constant employment of various kinds, and even for servants' places; but obstacles had always occurred to prevent their success. If they applied for the situation of a clerk to a man of extensive concerns, their qualifications were admitted; but there must be security given for their fidelity; they had friends who would give them a character, but who would give them nothing else.

If they applied for the place even of a menial servant, they were too clownish and awkward for the presence of the lady of the house;—and once, when William (who had been educated at the free grammar-school of the town in which he was born, and was an excellent scholar),



hoping to obtain the good opinion of a young clergyman whom he solicited for the favour of waiting upon him, said submissively, "that he understood Greek and Latin," he was rejected by the divine "because he could not dress hair."

Weary of repeating their mean accomplishments of "honesty, sobriety, humility," and on the precipice of reprobating such qualities,—which, however beneficial to the soul, gave no hope of preservation to the body,—they were prevented from this profanation by the fortunate remembrance of one qualification, which Henry, the possessor, in all his distress had never till then called to his recollection; but which, as soon as remembered and made known, changed the whole prospect of wretchedness placed before the two brothers; and they never knew want more.

Reader—Henry could play upon the fiddle.



## CHAPTER III.

NO sooner was it publicly known that Henry could play most enchantingly upon the violin, than he was invited into many companies where no other accomplishment could have introduced him. His performance was so much admired, that he had the honour of being admitted to several tavern feasts, of which he had also the satisfaction to partake without partaking of the expense. He was soon addressed by persons of the very first rank and fashion, and was once seen walking side by side with a peer.

But yet, in the midst of this powerful occasion for rejoicing, Henry, whose heart was particularly affectionate, had one grief which eclipsed all the happiness of his new life,—his brother William could *not* play on the fiddle! consequently, his brother William, with whom he had shared so much ill, could not share in his good fortune.

One evening, Henry, coming home from a dinner and concert at the Crown and Anchor, found William in a very gloomy and peevish humour, poring over the orations of Cicero. Henry asked him several times “how he did,” and similar questions, marks of his kind disposition towards his beloved brother; but all his endeavours, he perceived, could not soothe or soften the sullen mind of William. At length, taking from his pocket a handful of almonds, and some delicious fruit, (which he had purloined from the plenteous table, where his brother’s wants had never been absent from his thoughts, and laying them down before him, he ex-



claimed with a benevolent smile, "Do, William, let me teach you to play upon the violin."

William, full of the great orator whom he was then studying, and still more alive to the impossibility that *his* ear, attuned only to sense, could ever descend from that elevation, to learn mere sounds—William caught up the tempting presents which Henry had ventured his reputation to obtain for him, and threw them all indignantly at the donor's head.

Henry felt too powerfully his own superiority of fortune to resent this ingratitude. He patiently picked up the repast, and, laying it again upon the table, placed by its side a bottle of claret, which he held fast by the neck, while he assured his brother that, "although he had taken it while the waiter's back was turned, yet it might be drank with a safe conscience by them; for he had not himself tasted one drop at the feast, on purpose that he might enjoy a glass with his brother at home, and without wronging the company who had invited him."

The affection Henry expressed as he said this, or the force of a bumper of wine, which William had not seen since he left his father's house, had such an effect in calming the displeasure he was cherishing, that, on his brother's offering him the glass, he took it; and he deigned even to eat of his present.

Henry, to convince him that he had stinted himself to obtain for him this collation, sat down and partook of it.

After a few glasses, he again ventured to say, "Do, brother William, let me teach you to play on the violin."

Again his offer was refused, though with less vehemence. At length they both agreed that the attempt could not prosper.

"Then," said Henry, "William, go down to Oxford or to Cambridge. There, no doubt, they are as fond of learning



as in this gay town they are of music. You know you have as much talent for the one as I for the other. Do go to one of our universities, and see what dinners, what suppers, and what friends *you* will find there."



## CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM *did* go to one of those seats of learning, and would have starved there, but for the affectionate remittances of Henry, who shortly became so great a proficient in the art of music, as to have it in his power not only to live in a very reputable manner himself, but to send such supplies to his brother as enabled him to pursue his studies.

With some the progress of fortune is rapid. Such is the case when, either on merit or demerit, great patronage is bestowed. Henry's violin had often charmed, to a welcome forgetfulness of his insignificance, an effeminate lord; or warmed with ideas of honour the head of a duke, whose heart could never be taught to feel its manly glow. Princes had flown to the arms of their favourite fair ones with more rapturous delight, softened by the masterly touches of his art; and these elevated personages, ever grateful to those from whom they receive benefits, were competitors in the desire of heaping favours upon him. But he, in all his advantages, never once lost for a moment the hope of some advantage for his brother William; and when at any time he was pressed by a patron to demand a "token of his regard," he would constantly reply—

"I have a brother, a very learned man, if your Lordship (your Grace, or your Royal Highness) would confer some small favour on him——"

His Lordship would reply, "he was so teased and harassed



in his youth by learned men, that he had ever since detested the whole fraternity."

His Grace would inquire "if the learned man could play upon any instrument."

And his Highness would ask "if he could sing."

Rebuffs such as these poor Henry met with in all his applications for William, till one fortunate evening, at the conclusion of a concert, a great man shook him by the hand, and promised a living of five hundred a-year (the incumbent of which was upon his death-bed) to his brother, in return for the entertainment that Henry had just afforded him.

Henry wrote in haste to William, and began his letter thus:—"My dear brother, I am not sorry you did not learn to play upon the fiddle."



## CHAPTER V.

THE incumbent of this living died. William underwent the customary examinations, obtained successively the orders of deacon and priest, then, as early as possible, came to town to take possession of the gift which his brother's skill had acquired for him.

William had a steady countenance, a stern brow, and a majestic walk; all of which this new accession, this holy calling to religious vows, rather increased than diminished. In the early part of his life the violin of his brother had rather irritated than soothed the morose disposition of his nature; and though, since their departure from their native habitation, it had frequently calmed the violent ragings of his hunger, it had never been successful in appeasing the disturbed passions of a proud and disdainful mind.

As the painter views with delight and wonder the finished picture, expressive testimony of his taste and genius; as the physician beholds with pride and gladness the recovering invalid, whom his art has snatched from the jaws of death; as the father gazes with rapture on his first child, the creature to whom he has given life; so did Henry survey, with transporting glory, his brother, dressed for the first time in canonicals, to preach at his parish church. He viewed him from head to foot—smiled—viewed again—pulled one side of his gown a little this way, one end of his band a little that way—then stole behind him, pretending to place the curls of



his hair, but in reality to indulge, and to conceal, tears of fraternal pride and joy.

William was not without joy, neither was he wanting in love or gratitude to his brother; but his pride was not completely satisfied.

"I am the elder," thought he to himself, "and a man of literature; and yet I am obliged to my younger brother, an illiterate man." Here he suppressed every thought which could be a reproach to that brother. But there remained an object of his former contempt, now become even detestable to him—ungrateful man. The very agent of his elevation was now so odious to him, that he could not cast his eyes upon the friendly violin without instant emotions of disgust.

In vain would Henry at times endeavour to subdue his haughtiness by a tune on this wonderful machine. "You know I have no ear," William would sternly say, in recompense for one of Henry's best solos. Yet was William enraged at Henry's answer, when, after taking him to hear him preach, he asked him "how he liked his sermon?" and Henry modestly replied (in the technical phrase of his profession), "You know, brother, I have no ear."

Henry's renown in his profession daily increased; and with his fame, his friends. Possessing the virtues of humility and charity far above William, who was the professed teacher of those virtues, his reverend brother's disrespect for his vocation never once made him relax for a moment in his anxiety to gain him advancement in the church. In the course of a few years, and in consequence of many fortuitous circumstances, he had the gratification of procuring for him the appointment to a deanery; and thus at once placed between them an insurmountable barrier to all friendship, that was not the effect of condescension on the part of the dean.

William would now begin seriously to remonstrate with



his brother "upon his useless occupation," and would intimate "the degradation it was to him to hear his frivolous talent spoken of in all companies." Henry believed his brother to be much wiser than himself, and suffered shame that he was not more worthy of such a relation. To console himself for the familiar friend whom he now perceived he had entirely lost, he searched for one of a softer nature—he married.



## CHAPTER VI.

As Henry despaired of receiving his brother's approbation of his choice, he never mentioned the event to him. But William, being told of it by a third person, inquired of Henry, who confirmed the truth of the intelligence; and acknowledged that, in taking a wife, his sole view had been to obtain a kind companion and friend, who would bear with his failings and know how to esteem his few qualifications; therefore he had chosen one of his own rank in life, who, having a taste for music, and, as well as himself, an obligation to the art——

“And is it possible,” cried the Dean, “that what has been hinted to me is true? Is it possible that you have married a public singer?”

“She is as good as myself,” returned Henry. “I did not wish her to be better, for fear she should despise me.”

“As to despise,” answered the Dean, “Heaven forbid that we should despise any one—that would be acting unlike a Christian; but do you imagine I can ever introduce her to my intended wife, who is a woman of family?”

Henry had received in his life many insults from his brother; but, as he was not a vain man, he generally thought his brother in the right, and consequently submitted with patience; but, though he had little self-love, he had for his wife an unbounded affection: on the present occasion, therefore, he began to raise his voice, and even (in the



coarse expression of clownish anger) to lift his hand : but the sudden and affecting recollection of what he had done for the Dean—of the pains, the toils, the hopes and the fears, he had experienced when soliciting his preferment — this recollection overpowered his speech, weakened his arm, and deprived him of every active force, but that of flying out of his brother's house (in which they then were) as swift as lightning, while the Dean sat proudly contemplating—"that he had done his duty."

For several days Henry did not call, as was his custom, to see his brother : William's marriage drew near, and he sent a formal card to invite him on that day ; but, not having had the condescension to name his sister-in-law in the invitation, Henry thought proper not to accept it ; and the joyful event was celebrated without his presence. But the ardour of the bridegroom was not so vehement as to overcome every other sensation—he missed his brother : that heart-felt cheerfulness with which Henry had ever given him joy upon every happy occasion—even amidst all the politer congratulations of his other friends—seemed to the Dean mournfully wanting. This derogation from his felicity he was resolved to resent ; and, for a whole year, these brothers, whom adversity had entwined closely together, prosperity separated.

Though Henry, on his marriage, paid so much attention to his brother's prejudices, as to take his wife from her public employment, this had not so entirely removed the scruples of William, as to permit him to think her a worthy companion for Lady Clementina, the daughter of a poor Scotch earl, whom he had chosen, merely that he might be proud of her family ; and, in return, suffer that family to be ashamed of *his*.

If Henry's wife were not fit company for Lady Clementina, it is to be hoped that she was company for angels ; she



died within the first year of her marriage, a faithful and affectionate wife, and a mother.

When William heard of her death, he felt a sudden shock; and a kind of fleeting thought glanced across his mind, that—

“Had he known she had been so near her dissolution, she might have been introduced to Lady Clementina; and he himself would have called her sister.”

That is (if he had defined his fleeting idea),—“They would have had no objection to have met this poor woman for the *last time*; and would have descended to the familiarity of kindred, in order to have wished her a good journey to the other world.”

Or, is there in death, something which so raises the abjectness of the poor, that, on their approach to its sheltering abode, the arrogant believer feels the equality he had before denied, and trembles?



## CHAPTER VII.

THE wife of Henry had been dead near six weeks before the Dean heard the news : a month then elapsed in thoughts by himself, and consultations with Lady Clementina, how he should conduct himself on this occurrence. Her advice was—

“That, as Henry was the younger, and, by their stations, in every sense the Dean’s inferior, Henry ought first to make overtures of reconciliation.”

The Dean answered, “He had no doubt of his brother’s good-will to him ; but that he had reason to think, from the knowledge of his temper, he would be more likely to come to him upon an occasion to bestow comfort than to receive it : for instance, if I had suffered the misfortune of losing your Ladyship, my brother, I have no doubt, would have forgotten his resentment, and——”

She was offended that the loss of the vulgar wife of Henry should be compared to the loss of her—she lamented her indiscretion in forming an alliance with a family of no rank, and implored the Dean to wait till his brother should make some concession to him, before he renewed the acquaintance.

Though Lady Clementina had mentioned on this occasion her *indiscretion*, she was of a prudent age—she was near forty—yet, possessing rather a handsome face and person, she would not have impressed the spectator with a supposition that she was near so old, had she not constantly



attempted to appear much younger. Her dress was fantastically fashionable, her manners affected all the various passions of youth, and her conversation was perpetually embellished with accusations against her own "heedlessness, thoughtlessness, carelessness, and childishness."

There is, perhaps, in each individual, one parent motive to every action, good or bad. Be that as it may, it was evident that with Lady Clementina, all she said or did, all she thought or looked, had but one foundation—vanity. If she were nice, or if she were negligent, vanity was the cause of both ; for she would contemplate with the highest degree of self-complacency, "what such-a-one would say of her elegant preciseness, or what such-a-one would think of her interesting neglect."

If she complained she was ill, it was with the certainty that her langour would be admired ; if she boasted she was well, it was that the spectator might notice her glowing health ; if she laughed, it was because she thought it made her look pretty ; if she cried, it was because she thought it made her look prettier still. If she scolded her servants, it was from vanity, to shew her knowledge superior to theirs ; and she was kind to them from the same motive, that her benevolence might excite their admiration. Forward and impertinent in the company of her equals, from the vanity of supposing herself above them, she was bashful, even to shamefacedness in the presence of her superiors, because her vanity told her she engrossed all their observation. Through vanity she had no memory ; for she constantly forgot everything she heard others say, from the minute attention which she paid to everything she said herself.

She had become an old maid from vanity, believing ~~no~~ offer she received worthy of her deserts ; and when her power of further conquest began to be doubted, she married



from vanity, to repair the character of her fading charms. In a word, her vanity was of that magnitude, that she had no conjecture but that she was humble in her own opinion; and it would have been impossible to have convinced her that she thought well of herself, because she thought so *well* as to be assured that her own thoughts undervalued her.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THAT which, in a weak woman, is called vanity, in a man of sense is termed pride. Make one a degree stronger, or the other a degree weaker, and the Dean and his wife were infected with the self-same folly. Yet, let not the reader suppose that their failings (however despicable) had erased from the bosom of either all traces of humanity. They are human creatures who are meant to be portrayed in this little book; and where is the human creature who has not some good qualities to soften, if not to counterbalance, his bad ones?

The Dean, with all his pride, could not wholly forget his brother, nor eradicate from his remembrance the friend that he had been to him: he resolved, therefore, in spite of his wife's advice, to make him some overture, which he had no doubt Henry's good nature would instantly accept. The more he became acquainted with all the vain and selfish propensities of Lady Clementina, the more he felt a returning affection for his brother: but little did he suspect how much he loved him, till (after sending to various places to inquire for him, he learned, that on his wife's decease, unable to support her loss in the surrounding scene, Henry had taken the child she brought him in his arms, shaken hands with all his former friends, passing over his brother in the number, and set sail in a vessel bound for Africa, with a party of



Portuguese and some few English adventurers, to people there the uninhabited part of an extensive island.

This was a resolution, in Henry's circumstances, worthy a mind of singular sensibility: but William had not discerned, till then, that every act of Henry's was of the same description; and more than all, his every act towards him. He staggered when he heard the tidings; at first thought them untrue; but quickly recollected, that Henry was capable of surprising deeds. He recollected, with a force which gave him torture, the benevolence his brother had ever shown to him, the favours he had heaped upon him, the insults he had patiently endured in requital.

In the first emotion, which this intelligence gave the Dean, he forgot the dignity of his walk and gesture: he ran with frantic enthusiasm to every corner of his deanery where the least vestige of what belonged to Henry remained; he pressed close to his breast, with tender agony, a coat of his, which by accident had been left there; he kissed and wept over a walking-stick which Henry once had given him; he even took up with delight a music-book of his brother's, nor would his poor violin have then excited anger.

When his grief became more calm, he sat in deep and melancholy meditation, calling to mind when and where he saw his brother last. The recollection gave him fresh cause of regret. He remembered they had parted on his refusing to suffer Lady Clementina to admit the acquaintance of Henry's wife. Both Henry and his wife he now contemplated beyond the reach of his pride; and he felt the meanness and the imbecility of his haughtiness towards them.

To add to his self-reproaches, his tormented memory presented to him the exact countenance of his brother at their last interview, as it changed, while he censured his marriage,



and treated with disrespect the object of his conjugal affection. He remembered the anger repressed, the tear bursting forth, and the last glimpse he had of him, as he left his presence, most likely for ever.

In vain he now wished that he had followed him to the door ; that he had once shaken hands and owned his obligations to him before they had parted. In vain he wished too, that, in this extreme agony of his mind, he had such a friend to comfort him, as Henry had ever proved.



## CHAPTER IX.

THE avocations of an elevated life erase the deepest impressions. The Dean, in a few months, recovered from those which his brother's departure first made upon him; and he would now at times even condemn, in anger, Henry's having so hastily abandoned him and his native country, in resentment, as he conceived, of a few misfortunes which his usual fortitude should have taught him to have borne. Yet was he still desirous of his return, and wrote two or three letters expressive of his wish, which he anxiously endeavoured should reach him. But many years having elapsed without any intelligence from him, and a report having arrived, that he, and all the party with whom he went, had been slain by the savage inhabitants of the island, William's despair of seeing his brother again caused the desire to diminish; while attention and affection to a still nearer and dearer relation than Henry had ever been to him, now chiefly engaged his mind.

Lady Clementina had brought him a son, on whom, from his infancy, he doted; and the boy, in riper years, possessing a handsome person, and evincing a quickness of parts, gratified the father's darling passion, pride, as well as the mother's, vanity.

The Dean had, besides this child, a domestic comfort highly gratifying to his ambition: the Bishop of \* \* \* \* became intimately acquainted with him soon after his marriage, and from his daily visits had become, as it were,



a part of the family. This was much honour to the Dean, not only as the Bishop was his superior in the church, but was of that part of the bench whose blood is ennobled by a race of ancestors, and to which all wisdom on the plebeian side crouches in humble respect.

Year after year rolled on in pride and grandeur: the Bishop and the Dean passing their time in attending levees and in talking politics; Lady Clementina passing hers in attending routs and in talking of *herself*, till the son arrived at the age of thirteen.

Young William passed *his* time, from morning till night, with persons who taught him to walk, to ride, to talk, to think like a man—a foolish man, instead of a wise child, as nature designed him to be.

This unfortunate youth was never permitted to have one conception of his own—all were taught him: he was never once asked, “what he thought;” but men were paid to tell him “how to think.” He was taught to revere such and such persons, however unworthy of his reverence; to believe such and such things, however unworthy of his credit; and to act so and so, on such and such occasions, however unworthy of his feelings.

Such were the lessons of the tutors assigned him by his father: those masters whom his mother gave him did him less mischief; for though they distorted his limbs, and made his manners effeminate, they did not interfere beyond the body.

Mr. Norwynne (the family name of his father, and though but a school-boy he was called *Mister*) could talk on history, on politics, and on religion, surprisingly to all who never listened to a parrot or magpie: for he merely repeated what had been told to him, without one reflection upon the sense or probability of his report. He had been praised for his memory; and to ensure continuance of that praise,



he was so anxious to retain every sentence he had heard, or read, that the poor creature had no time for one native idea, but could only re-deliver his tutors' lessons to his father, and his father's to his tutors. But, whatever he said or did, was the admiration of all who came to the house of the Dean, and who knew he was an only child. Indeed, considering the labour that was taken to spoil him, he was rather a commendable youth; for, with the pedantic folly of his teachers, the blind affection of his father and mother, the obsequiousness of the servants, and the flattery of the visitors, it was some credit to him that he was not an idiot or a brute; though, when he imitated the manners of a man, he had something of the latter in his appearance; for he would grin and bow to a lady, catch her fan in haste when it fell, and hand her to her coach, as thoroughly void of all the sentiment which gives grace to such tricks, as a monkey.



## CHAPTER X.

ONE morning in winter, just as the Dean, his wife, and darling child, had finished their breakfast at their house in London, a servant brought in a letter to his master, and said "the man waited for an answer."

"Who is the man?" cried the Dean, with all that terrifying dignity with which he never failed to address his inferiors, especially such as waited on his person.

The servant replied with a servility of tone equal to the haughty one of his master, "He did not know; but that the man looked like a sailor, and had a boy with him."

"A begging letter, no doubt," cried Lady Clementina.

"Take it back," said the Dean, "and bid him send up word who he is, and what is his errand."

The servant went; and returning said, "He comes from on board a ship; his captain sent him, and his errand is, he believes, to leave a boy he has brought with him."

"A boy!" cried the Dean: "what have I to do with a boy? I expect no boy? What boy? What age?"

"He looks about twelve or thirteen," replied the servant.

"He is mistaken in the house," said the Dean. "Let me look at the letter again."

He did look at it, and saw plainly it was directed to himself. Upon a second glance, he had so perfect a recollection of the hand, as to open it instantaneously; and,



after ordering the servant to withdraw, he read the following :—

“Zocotora Island, April 6.

“MY DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM,—It is a long time since we have seen one another ; but I hope not so long, that you have quite forgotten the many happy days we once passed together.

“I did not take my leave of you when I left England, because it would have been too much for me. I had met with a great many sorrows just at that time : one of which was, the misfortune of losing the use of my right hand by a fall from my horse, which accident robbed me of most of my friends ; for I could no longer entertain them with my performance as I used to do ; and so I was ashamed to see them or you ; and that was the reason I came hither to try my fortune with some other adventurers.

“You have, I suppose, heard that the savages of the island put our whole party to death. But it was my chance to escape their cruelty. I was heart-broken for my comrades ; yet, upon the whole, I do not know that the savages were much to blame ; we had no business to invade their territories ; and if they had invaded England, we should have done the same by them. My life was spared, because, having gained some little strength in my hand, during the voyage, I pleased their king when I arrived there, with playing on my violin.

“They spared my child, too, in pity to my lamentations, when they were going to put him to death. Now, dear brother, before I say any more to you concerning my child, I will first ask your pardon for any offence I may have ever given you, in all the time we lived so long together. I know you have often found fault with me, and I dare say I have been very often to blame ; but I here solemnly



declare, that I never did anything purposely to offend you, but mostly, all I could, to oblige you ; and I can safely declare, that I never bore you above a quarter of an hour's resentment for anything you might have said to me which I thought harsh.

“ Now, dear William, after being in this island eleven years, the weakness in my hand has unfortunately returned ; and yet there being no appearance of complaint, the uninformed islanders think it is all my obstinacy, and that I *will not* entertain them with my music, which makes me say that I *cannot* ; and they have imprisoned me, and threaten to put my son to death, if I persist in my stubbornness any longer.

“ The anguish I feel in my mind takes away all hope of the recovery of strength in my hand ; and I have no doubt but that they intend, in a few days, to put their horrid threat into execution.

“ Therefore, dear brother William, hearing, in my prison, of a most uncommon circumstance, which is, that an English vessel is lying at a small distance from the island, I have intrusted a faithful negro to take my child to the ship, and deliver him to the captain, with a request that he may be sent (with this letter) to you, on the ship's arrival in England.

“ Now, my dear, dear brother William, in case the poor boy should live to come to you, I have no doubt but you will receive him ; yet, excuse a poor fond father, if I say a word or two which I hope may prove in his favour.

“ Pray, my dear brother, do not think it the child's fault, but mine, that you will find him so ignorant—he has always shown a quickness and a willingness to learn, and would, I dare say, if he had been brought up under your care, have been by this time a good scholar—but you know I am no scholar myself. Besides, not having



any books here, I have only been able to teach my child by talking to him ; and in all my conversations with him I have never taken much pains to instruct him in the manners of my own country ; thinking, that if ever he went over, he would learn them soon enough ; and if he never *did* go over, that it would be as well he knew nothing about them.

“I have kept him also from the knowledge of everything which I have thought pernicious in the conduct of the savages, except that I have now and then pointed out a few of their faults, in order to give him a true conception and a proper horror of them. At the same time I have taught him to love, and to do good to his neighbour, whoever that neighbour may be, and whatever may be his failings. Falsehood of every kind I included in this precept as forbidden, for no one can love his neighbour and deceive him.

“I have instructed him, too, to hold in contempt all frivolous vanity, and all those indulgences which he was never likely to obtain. He has learned all that I have undertaken to teach him ; but I am afraid you will yet think he has learned too little.

“Your wife, I fear, will be offended at his want of politeness, and perhaps proper respect for a person of her rank ; but indeed he is very tractable, and can, without severity, be amended of all his faults ; and though you will find he has many, yet, pray, my dear brother,—pray, my dear brother William, call to mind he has been a dutiful and an affectionate child to me ; and that, had it pleased Heaven we had lived together for many years to come, I verily believe I should never have experienced one mark of his disobedience.

“Farewell for ever, my dear, dear brother William : and if my poor, kind, affectionate child should live to



bring you this letter, sometimes speak to him of me ; and let him know that for twelve years he was my sole comfort ; and that, when I sent him from me, in order to save his life, I laid down my head upon the floor of the cell in which I was confined, and prayed that heaven might end my days before the morning."

\* \* \* \* \*

This was the conclusion of the letter, except four or five lines which (with his name) were so much blotted, apparently — with tears, that they were illegible.



## CHAPTER XI.

WHILE the Dean was reading to himself this letter, his countenance frequently changed, and once or twice the tears streamed from his eyes. When it was finished, he exclaimed :—

“My brother has sent his child to me, and I will be a parent to him.” He was rushing towards the door, when Lady Clementina stopped him.

“Is it proper, do you think, Mr. Dean, that all the servants in the house should be witnesses to your meeting with your brother and your nephew in the state in which they must be at present? Send for them into a private apartment.”

“My brother !” cried the Dean, “Oh, that it *were* my brother ! The man is merely a person from the ship, who has conducted his child hither.”

The bell was rung, money was sent to the man, and orders given that the boy should be shown up immediately.

While young Henry was walking up the stairs, the Dean’s wife was weighing in her mind in what manner it would most redound to her honour to receive him ; for her vanity taught her to believe that the whole inquisitive world pried into her conduct, even upon every family occurrence.

Young William was wondering to himself what kind of an unpolished monster his beggarly cousin would appear ; and



was contemplating how much the poor youth would be surprised and awed by his superiority.

The Dean felt no other sensation than an impatient desire of beholding the child.

The door opened—and the son of his brother Henry,—of his benefactor, entered.

The habit he had on when he left his father, having been of slight texture, was worn out by the length of the voyage, and he was in the dress of a sailor-boy. Though about the same age with his cousin, he was something taller; and though a strong family resemblance appeared between the two youths, he was handsomer than William; and, from a simplicity spread over his countenance, a quick impatience in his eye, which denoted anxious curiosity and childish surprise at every new object which presented itself, he appeared younger than his informed and well-bred cousin.

He walked into the room, not with a dictated obeisance, but with a hurrying step, a half-pleased, yet a half-frightened look, an instantaneous survey of every person present; not as demanding “what they thought of him,” but expressing almost as plainly as in direct words “what he thought of them.” For all alarm in respect to his safety and reception seemed now wholly forgotten in the curiosity which the sudden sight of strangers, such as he had never seen in his life before, excited; and as to *himself*, he did not appear to know there was such a person existing. His whole faculties were absorbed in *others*.

The Dean's reception of him did honour to his sensibility and his gratitude to his brother. After the first affectionate gaze, he ran to him, took him in his arms, sat down, drew him to him, held him between his knees, and repeatedly exclaimed, “I will repay to you all I owe to your father.”

The boy, in return, hugged the Dean round the neck, kissed him, and exclaimed—



"Oh, you *are* my father. You have just such eyes, and such a forehead. Indeed, you would be almost the same as he if it were not for that great white thing which grows upon your head!"

Let the reader understand that the Dean, fondly attached to every ornament of his dignified function, was never seen (unless caught in bed) without an enormous wig. With this, young Henry was enormously struck, having never seen so unbecoming a decoration, either in the savage island from whence he came, or on board the vessel in which he sailed.

"Do you imagine," cried his uncle, laying his hand gently on the reverend habiliment, "that this grows?"

"What is on *my* head grows," said young Henry, "and so does that which is upon my father's."

"But now you are come to Europe, Henry, you will see many persons with such things as these, which they put on and take off."

"Why do you wear such things?"

"As a distinction between us and inferior people. They are worn to give an importance to the wearer."

"That is just as the savages do. They hang brass nails, wire, buttons, and entrails of beasts all over them, to give them importance."

The Dean now led his nephew to Lady Clementina, and told him "she was his aunt, to whom he must behave with the utmost respect."

"I will, I will," he replied; "for she, I see, is a person of importance too. She has, very nearly, such a white thing upon her head as you have!"

His aunt had not yet fixed in what manner it would be advisable to behave; whether with intimidating grandeur, or with amiable tenderness. While she was hesitating between both, she felt a kind of jealous apprehension that her son



was not so engaging either in his person or address as his cousin, and therefore she said—

“I hope, Dean, the arrival of this child will give you a still higher sense of the happiness we enjoy in our own. What an instructive contrast between the manners of the one and of the other!”

“It is not the child’s fault,” returned the Dean, “that he is not so elegant in his manners as his cousin. Had William been bred in the same place, he would have been as unpolished as this boy.”

“I beg your pardon, Sir,” said young William, with a formal bow and a sarcastic smile; “I assure you several of my tutors have told me that I appear to know many things as it were by instinct.”

Young Henry fixed his eyes upon his cousin while, with steady self-complacency, he delivered this speech; and no sooner was it concluded than Henry cried out, in a kind of wonder—

“A little man! as I am alive, a little man! I did not know there were such little men in this country! I never saw one in my life before!”

“This is a boy,” said the Dean, “a boy not older than yourself.”

He put their hands together, and William gravely shook hands with his cousin.

“It *is* a man.” continued young Henry, then stroked his cousin’s chin. “No, no; I do not know whether it is or not.”

“I tell you again,” said the Dean, “he is a boy of your own age. You and he are cousins; for I am his father.”

“How can that be?” said young Henry; “he called you Sir.”

“In this country,” said the Dean, “polite children do not call their parents *father* and *mother*.”



"Then don't they sometimes forget to love them as such?" asked Henry.

His uncle became now impatient to interrogate him in every particular concerning his father's state. Lady Clementina felt equal impatience to know where the father was: whether he was coming to live with them, wanted anything of them, and every circumstance in which her vanity was interested. Explanations followed all these questions; but which, exactly agreeing with what the elder Henry's letter has related, require no recital here.



## CHAPTER XII.

THAT vanity, which presided over every thought and deed of Lady Clementina, was the protector of young Henry within her house. It represented to her how amiable her conduct would appear in the eye of the world, should she condescend to treat this destitute nephew as her own son; what envy such heroic virtue would excite in the hearts of her particular friends, and what grief in the bosoms of all those who did not like her.

The Dean was a man of no inconsiderable penetration. He understood the thoughts which, upon this occasion, passed in the mind of his wife; and, in order to insure her kind treatment of the boy, instead of reproaching her for the cold manner in which she had at first received him, he praised her tender and sympathetic heart for having shewn him so much kindness, and thus stimulated her vanity to be praised still more.

William, the mother's own son, far from apprehending a rival in this savage boy, was convinced of his own pre-eminence, and felt an affection for him—though rather as a foil than as a cousin. He sported with his ignorance upon all occasions, and even lay in wait for circumstances that might expose it. While young Henry, strongly impressed with everything which appeared new to him, expressed, without reserve, the sensations which those novelties excited, wholly careless of the construction put on his observations.



He never appeared either offended or abashed when laughed at; but still pursued his questions, and still discovered his wonder at many replies made to him, though "simpleton," "poor silly boy," and "idiot," were vociferated around him, from his cousin, his aunt, and their constant visitor, the Bishop.

His uncle would frequently undertake to instruct him; so indeed would the Bishop; but Lady Clementina, her son, and the greatest part of her companions, found something so irresistibly ridiculous in his remarks, that nothing but immoderate laughter followed: they thought such folly had even merit in the way of entertainment, and they wished him no wiser.

Having been told that every morning, on first seeing his uncle, he was to make a respectful bow, and coming into the Dean's dressing-room just as he was out of bed, his wig lying on the table, Henry appeared at a loss which of the two he should bow to—at last he gave the preference to his uncle; but, afterwards, bowed reverently to the wig. In this, he did what he conceived was proper, from the introduction which the Dean, on his first arrival, had given him to this venerable stranger; for, in reality, Henry had a contempt for all finery; and had called even his aunt's jewels when they were first shown to him, "trumpery," asking "what they were good for?" But being corrected in this disrespect, and informed of their high value, he, like a good convert, gave up his reason to his faith; and becoming, like all converts, over-zealous, he now believed there was great worth in all gaudy appearances, and even respected the earrings of Lady Clementina almost as much as he respected herself.



## CHAPTER XIII.

IT was to be lamented, that when young Henry had been several months in England, had been taught to read, and had, of course, in the society in which he lived, seen much of the enlightened world, yet the natural expectation of his improvement was by no means answered.

Notwithstanding the sensibility, which upon various occasions he manifested in the most captivating degree, notwithstanding the seeming gentleness of his nature upon all occasions, there now appeared, in most of his inquiries and remarks, a something which demonstrated either a stupid or troublesome disposition: either dullness of conception, or an obstinacy of perseverance in comments, and in arguments, which were glaringly false.

Observing his uncle one day offended with his coachman, and hearing him say to him, in a very angry tone, "You shall never drive me again"—

The moment the man quitted the room, Henry (with his eyes fixed in the deepest contemplation) repeated five or six times in a half whisper to himself—

*"You shall never drive me again."*

*"You shall never drive me again."*

The Dean at last called to him, "What do you mean by thus repeating my words?"

"I am trying to find out what *you* meant," said Henry.



"What! don't you know?" cried his enlightened cousin: "Richard is turned away: he is never to get upon our coach-box again, never to drive any of us more."

"And was it pleasure to drive us, cousin? I am sure I have often pitied him: it rained sometimes very hard when he was on the box; and sometimes Lady Clementina has kept him a whole hour at the door all in the cold and snow: was that pleasure!"

"No," replied young William.

"Was it honour, cousin?"

"No," exclaimed his cousin, with a contemptuous smile.

"Then why did my uncle say to him, as a punishment, he should never——"

"Come hither, child," said the Dean, "and let me instruct you: your father's negligence has been inexcusable. There are in society," continued the Dean, "rich and poor; the poor are born to serve the rich."

"And what are the rich born for?"

"To be served by the poor."

"But suppose the poor would not serve them?"

"Then they must starve."

"And so poor people are permitted to live, only upon condition that they wait upon the rich?"

"Is that a hard condition? or if it were, they will be rewarded in a better world than this."

"Is there a better world than this?"

"Is it possible you do not know there is?"

"I heard my father once say something about a world to come; but he stopped short, and said I was too young to understand what he meant."

"The world to come," returned the Dean, "is where we shall go after death; and there, no distinction will be made between rich and poor—all persons there will be equal."



“Ay, now I see what makes it a better world than this. But cannot this world try to be as good as that?”

“In respect to placing all persons on a level, it is utterly impossible: God has ordained it otherwise.”

“How! has God ordained a distinction to be made, and will not make any himself?”

The Dean did not proceed in his instructions: he now began to think his brother in the right, and that the boy was too young, or too weak, to comprehend the subject.



## CHAPTER XIV.

IN addition to his ignorant conversation upon many topics, young Henry had an incorrigible misconception and misapplication of many *words*. His father having had but few opportunities of discoursing with him, upon account of his attendance at the court of the savages, and not having books in the island, he had consequently many words to learn of this country's language, when he arrived in England: this task his retentive memory made easy to him; but his childish inattention to their proper signification, still made his want of education conspicuous.

He would call *compliments*, *lies*—*reserve* he would call *pride*—*stateliness*, *affectation*—and for the words *war* and *battle*, he constantly substituted the word *massacre*.

"Sir," said William to his father, one morning as he entered the room, "do you hear how the cannons are firing, and the bells ringing?"

"Then I dare say," cried Henry, "there has been another massacre."

The Dean called to him in anger, "Will you never learn the right use of words? You mean to say a battle."

"Then what is a massacre?" cried the frightened but still curious Henry.

"A massacre," replied his uncle, "is when a number of people are slain——"

"I thought," returned Henry, "soldiers had been people!"



"You interrupted me," said the Dean, "before I finished my sentence. Certainly, both soldiers and sailors are people, but they engage to die by their own free will and consent."

"What ! all of them ?"

"Most of them."

"But the rest are massacred ?"

The Dean answered, "The number who go to battle unwillingly, and by force, are few ; and for the others, they have previously sold their lives to the state."

"For what ?"

"For soldiers' and sailors' pay."

"My father used to tell me, we must not take away our own lives ; but he forgot to tell me we might sell them for others to take away.

"William," said the Dean to his son, his patience tired with his nephew's persevering nonsense, "explain to your cousin the difference between a battle and a massacre."

"A massacre," said William, rising from his seat, and fixing his eyes alternately upon his father, his mother, and the bishop (all of whom were present) for their approbation, rather than the person's to whom his instructions were to be addressed—"a massacre," said William, "is when human beings are slain, who have it not in their power to defend themselves."

"Dear cousin William," said Henry, "that must ever be the case with every one who is killed."

After a short hesitation, William replied—

"In massacres, people are put to death for no crime, but merely because they are objects of suspicion."

"But in battle," said Henry, "the persons put to death are not even suspected."

The Bishop now condescended to end this disputation, by saying emphatically—



“Consider, young savage, that in battle neither the infant, the aged, the sick, nor infirm, are involved, but only those in the full prime of health and vigour.”

As this argument came from so great and reverend a man as the Bishop, Henry was obliged, by a frown from his uncle, to submit, as one refuted; although he had an answer at the veriest tip of his tongue, which it was torture to him not to utter. What he wished to say must ever remain a secret. The church has its terrors as well as the law; and Henry was awed by the Dean's tremendous wig, as much as Paternoster Row is awed by the attorney-general.



## CHAPTER XV.

IF the Dean had loved his wife but moderately, seeing all her faults clearly as he did, he must frequently have quarrelled with her: if he had loved her with tenderness, he must have treated her with a degree of violence in the hope of amending her failings; but, having neither personal nor mental affection towards her, sufficiently interesting to give himself the trouble to contradict her will in anything, he passed for one of the best husbands in the world. Lady Clementina went out when she liked, stayed at home when she liked, dressed as she liked, and talked as she liked, without a word of disapprobation from her husband, and all—because he cared nothing about her.

Her vanity attributed this indulgence to inordinate affection; and observers in general thought her happier in her marriage than the beloved wife who bathes her pillow with tears by the side of an angry husband, whose affection is so excessive, that he unkindly upbraids her because she is—less than perfection.

The Dean's wife was not so dispassionately considered by some of his acquaintance as by himself; for they would now and then hint at her foibles: but this great liberty she also conceived to be the effect of most violent love, or most violent admiration; and such would have been her construction, had they commended her follies—had they totally slighted, or had they beaten her.



Amongst those acquaintances, the aforesaid bishop, by far the most frequent visitor, did not come merely to lounge an idle hour, but he had a more powerful motive—the desire of fame, and dread of being thought a man receiving large emolument for unimportant service.

The Dean, if he did not procure him the renown he wished, still preserved him from the apprehended censure.

The elder William was, to his negligent or ignorant superiors in the church, such as an apt boy at school is, to the rich dunces—William performed the prelates' tasks for them, and they rewarded him, not, indeed, with toys or money, but with their countenance, their company, their praise. And scarcely was there a sermon preached from the patrician part of the bench, in which the Dean did not fashion some periods, blot out some uncouth phrases, render some obscure sentiments intelligible, and he was the person, when the work was printed, to correct the press.

This honourable and right reverend bishop delighted in printing and publishing his works, or rather the entire works of the Dean, which passed for his; and so degradingly did William, the shopkeeper's son, think of his own honest extraction, that he was blinded, even to the loss of honour, by the lustre of this noble acquaintance: for though, in other respects, he was a man of integrity, yet, when the gratification of his friend was in question, he was a liar: he not only disowned his giving him aid in any of his publications, but he never published anything in his own name, without declaring to the world, "that he had been obliged for several hints on the subject, for many of the most judicious corrections, and for those passages in page so and so (naming the most eloquent parts of the work), to his noble and learned friend the bishop."

The Dean's wife, being a fine lady, while her husband



and his friend pored over books or their own manuscripts at home, ran from house to house, from public amusement to public amusement; but much less for the pleasure of *seeing*, than for that of being *seen*. Nor was it material to her enjoyment, whether she were observed or welcome where she went, as she never entertained the smallest doubt of either, but rested assured that her presence aroused curiosity and dispensed gladness all around.

One morning she went forth to pay her visits, all smiles, such as she thought captivating: she returned all tears, such as she thought no less endearing.

Three ladies accompanied her home, entreating her to be patient under a misfortune to which even kings are liable—namely, defamation.

Young Henry, struck with compassion at grief of which he knew not the cause, begged to know “what was the matter?”

“Inhuman monsters, to treat a woman thus!” cried his aunt, in a fury, casting the corner of her eye into a looking-glass, to see how rage became her.

“But, comfort yourself,” said one of her companions: “few people will believe you merit the charge.”

“But few! if only one believe it, I shall call my reputation lost, and I will shut myself up in some lonely hut, and for ever renounce all that is dear to me!”

“What! all your fine clothes?” said Henry, in amazement.

“Of what importance will my best dresses be, when nobody would see them?”

“You would see them yourself, dear aunt; and I am sure nobody admires them more.”

“Now you speak of that,” said she, “I do not think this gown I have on, becoming; I am sure I look——”

The Dean, with the Bishop (to whom he had been reading



a treatise just going to the press, which was to be published in the name of the latter, though written by the former), now entered, to inquire why they had been sent for in such haste.

"Oh, Dean! oh, my Lord Bishop!" she cried, resuming that grief which the thoughts of her dress had for a time dispelled, "my reputation is destroyed: a public print has accused me of playing deep at my own house, and winning all the money!"

"The world will never reform," said the Bishop: "all our labour, my friend, is thrown away."

"But is it possible," cried the Dean, "that any one has dared to say this of you?"

"Here it is in print," said she, holding out a newspaper.

The Dean read the paragraph, and then exclaimed—

"I can forgive a falsehood *spoken*—the warmth of conversation may excuse it; but to *write* and *print* an untruth is unpardonable,—and I will prosecute this publisher."

"Still the falsehood will go down to posterity," said Lady Clementina; "and after-ages will think I was a gambler."

"Comfort yourself, dear Madam," said young Henry, wishing to console her; "perhaps after-ages may not hear of you, nor even the present age think much about you."

The Bishop now exclaimed, after having taken the paper from the Dean, and read the paragraph—

"It is a libel, a rank libel, and the author must be punished."

"Not only the author, but the publisher," said the Dean.

"Not only the publisher, but the printer," continued the Bishop.

"And must my name be bandied about by lawyers in a



common court of justice?" cried Lady Clementina; "how shocking to my delicacy!"

"My Lord, it is a pity we cannot try them by the ecclesiastical court," said the Dean, with a sigh.

"Or by the Indian delinquent bill," said the Bishop, with vexation.

"So totally innocent as I am!" she vociferated with sobs. "Every one knows I never touch a card at home, and this libel charges me with playing at my own house; and though, whenever I do play, I own I am apt to win, yet it is merely for my amusement."

"Win or not win, play or not play," exclaimed both the churchmen, "this is a libel—no doubt, no doubt, a libel."

Poor Henry's confined knowledge of his native language tormented him so much with curiosity upon this occasion, that he went softly up to his uncle, and asked him in a whisper, "What is the meaning of the word libel?"

"A libel," replied the Dean, in a raised voice, "is that which one person publishes to the injury of another."

"And what can the injured person do," asked Henry, "if the accusation should chance to be true?"

"Prosecute," replied the Dean.

"But, then, what does he do if the accusation be false?"

"Prosecute likewise," answered the Dean.

"How, uncle! is it possible that the innocent behave just like the guilty?"

"There is no other way to act."

"Why, then, if I were the innocent, I would do nothing at all, sooner than I would act like the guilty. I would not persecute——"

"I said *prosecute*," cried the Dean in anger. "Leave the room: you have no comprehension."

"Oh yes, now I understand the difference of the two words; but they sound so much alike, I did not at first



observe the distinction. You said, "the innocent *prosecute*, but the guilty *persecute*." He bowed (convinced as he thought), and left the room.

After this modern star-chamber, which was left sitting, had agreed on its mode of vengeance, and the writer of the libel was made acquainted with his danger, he waited, in all humility, upon Lady Clementina, and assured her, with every appearance of sincerity—that she was not the person alluded to by the paragraph in question, but that the initials which she had conceived to mark out her name were, in fact, meant to point out Lady Catherine Newland.

"But, Sir," cried Lady Clementina, "what could induce you to write such a paragraph upon Lady Catherine? She *never* plays."

"We know that, Madam, or we dared not have attacked her. Though we must circulate libels, Madam, to gratify our numerous readers, yet no people are more in fear of prosecutions than authors and editors : therefore, unless we are deceived in our information, we always take care to libel the innocent ; we apprehend nothing from them—their own characters support them—but the guilty are very tenacious, and what they cannot secure by fair means, they will employ force to accomplish. Dear Madam, be assured I have too much regard for a wife and seven small children, who are maintained by my industry alone, to have written anything in the nature of a libel upon your Ladyship."



## CHAPTER XVI.

ABOUT this period the Dean had just published a pamphlet in his own name, and in which that of his friend the Bishop was only mentioned with thanks for hints, observations, and condescending encouragement to the author.

This pamphlet glowed with the Dean's love for his country ; and such a country as he described, it was impossible *not* to love. "Salubrious air, fertile fields, wood, water, corn, grass, sheep, oxen, fish, fowl, fruit, and vegetables," were dispersed with the most prodigal hand ; 'valiant men, virtuous women ; statesmen wise and just ; tradesmen abounding in merchandise and money ; husbandmen possessing peace, ease, plenty ; and all ranks liberty.'" This brilliant description, while the Dean read the work to his family, so charmed poor Henry, that he repeatedly cried out—

"I am glad I came to this country."

But it so happened that, a few days after, Lady Clementina, in order to render the delicacy of her taste admired, could eat of no one dish upon the table, but found fault with them all. The Dean at length said to her—

"Indeed, you are too nice : reflect upon the hundreds of poor creatures who have not a morsel or a drop of anything to subsist upon, except bread and water ; and even of the first a scanty allowance, but for which they are obliged to toil six days in a week, from sun to sun."



"Pray, uncle," cried Henry, "in what country do these poor people live?"

"In this country," replied the Dean.

Henry rose from his chair, ran to the chimney-piece, took up his uncle's pamphlet, and said, "I don't remember your mentioning them here."

"Perhaps I have not," answered the Dean, coolly.

Still Henry turned over each leaf of the book; but he could meet only with luxurious details of "the fruits of the earth, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea."

"Why, here is provision enough for all the people," said Henry: "why should they want? why do not they go and take some of these things?"

"They must not," said the Dean, "unless they were their own."

"What, uncle! does no part of the earth, nor anything which the earth produces, belong to the poor?"

"Certainly not."

"Why did not you say so then in your pamphlet?"

"Because it is what everybody knows."

"Oh, then, what you have said in your pamphlet is only what—nobody knows."

There appeared to the Dean, in the delivery of this sentence, a satirical acrimony, which his irritability as an author could but ill forgive.

An author, it is said, has more acute feelings in respect to his works than any artist in the world besides.

Henry had some cause, on the present occasion, to think this observation just; for no sooner had he spoken the foregoing words, than his uncle took him by the hand out of the room; and leading him to his study, there he enumerated his various faults, and having told him "it was for all those, too long permitted with impunity, and not merely



for the *present* impertinence, that he meant to punish him," ordered him to close confinement in his chamber for a week.

In the meantime, the Dean's pamphlet (less hurt by Henry's critique than *he* had been) was proceeding to the tenth edition, and the author acquiring literary reputation beyond what he had ever conferred on his friend the bishop.

The style, the energy, the eloquence of the work, was echoed by every reader who could afford to buy it; some few enlightened ones excepted, who chiefly admired the author's *invention*.

Henry's  
field



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE Dean, in the good humour which the rapid sale of his book produced, once more took his nephew to his bosom ; and although the ignorance of young Henry upon the late occasions had offended him very highly, yet that self-same ignorance, evinced a short time after upon a different subject, struck his uncle as productive of a most rare and exalted virtue.

Henry had frequently, in his conversation, betrayed the total want of all knowledge in respect to religion or futurity ; and the Dean, for this reason, delayed taking him to church, till he had previously given him instructions *wherefore* he went.

A leisure morning arrived ; on which he took his nephew to his study, and implanted in his youthful mind the first unconfused idea of the Creator of the universe.

The Dean was eloquent, Henry was all attention ; his understanding, expanded by time to the conception of a God, and not warped by custom, from the sensations which a just notion of that God inspires, dwelt with delight and wonder on the information given him ; lessons which, instilled into the head of a senseless infant, too often produce, throughout his remaining life, an impious indifference to the truths revealed.

Yet, with all that astonished and respectful sensibility which Henry shewed on this great occasion, he still expressed his opinion, and put questions to the Dean with his usual simplicity, till he felt himself convinced.



"What!" cried he, after being informed of the attributes inseparable from the Supreme Being, and having received the injunction to offer prayers to Him night and morning—"what! am I permitted to speak to Power Divine?"

"At all times," replied the Dean.

"How! whenever I like?"

"Whenever you like," returned the Dean.

"I durst not," cried Henry, "make so free with the Bishop, nor dare any of his attendants."

"The Bishop," said the Dean, "is the servant of God, and therefore must be treated with respect."

"With more respect than his Master?" asked Henry.

The Dean not replying immediately to this question, Henry, in the rapidity of inquiry, ran on to another: "But what am I to say when I speak to the Almighty?"

"First, thank Him for the favours He has bestowed on you."

"What favours?"

"You amaze me," cried the Dean, "by your question. Do not you live in ease, in plenty, and happiness?"

"And do the poor and the unhappy thank Him too, Uncle?"

"No doubt: every human being glorifies Him, for having been made a rational creature."

"And does my aunt, and all her card-parties, glorify Him for that?"

The Dean again made no reply, and Henry went on to other questions, till his uncle had fully instructed him as to the nature and the form of *prayer*; and now, putting into his hands a book, he pointed out to him a few short prayers, which he wished him to address to Heaven in his presence.

Whilst Henry bent his knees, as his uncle had directed, he trembled, turned pale, and held, for a slight support, on the chair placed before him.



His uncle went to him, and asked him "What was the matter?"

"Oh," cried Henry, "when I first came to your door with my poor father's letter, I shook for fear you would not look upon me; and I cannot help feeling even more now than I did then."

The Dean embraced him with warmth, gave him confidence, and retired to the other side of the study to observe his whole demeanour on this new occasion.

As he beheld his features varying between the passions of humble fear and fervent hope, his face sometimes glowing with the rapture of thanksgiving, and sometimes with the blushes of contrition, he thus exclaimed apart—

"This is the true education on which to found the principles of religion. The favour conferred by Heaven in granting the freedom of petitions to its throne can never be conceived with proper force but by those whose most tedious moments during their infancy were *not* passed in prayer. Unthinking governors of childhood! to insult the Deity with a form of worship, in which the mind has no share—nay, worse, for which it has repugnance; and, by the thoughtless habits of youth, prevent, even in age, devotion."

Henry's attention was so firmly fixed, that he forgot there was a spectator of his fervour; nor did he hear young William enter the chamber, and even speak to his father.

At length, closing his book, and rising from his knees, he approached his uncle and cousin with a sedateness in his air which gave the latter a very false opinion of the state of his youthful companion's mind.

"So, Mr. Henry," cried William, "you have been obliged, at last, to say your prayers."

The Dean informed his son "that to Henry it was no punishment to pray."



"He is the strangest boy I ever knew," said William, inadvertently.

"To be sure," said Henry, "I was frightened when I first knelt; but when I came to the words, *Father, which art in heaven*, they gave me courage; for I know how merciful and kind a *father* is, beyond any one else."

The Dean again embraced his nephew, let fall a tear to his poor brother Henry's misfortunes, and admonished the youth to shew himself equally submissive to other instructions, as he had done to those which inculcate piety.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE interim between youth and manhood was passed by young William and young Henry in studious application to literature; some casual mistakes in our customs and manners on the part of Henry,—some too close adherences to them on the side of William.

Their different characters when boys were preserved when they became men. Henry still retained that natural simplicity which his early destiny had given him; he wondered still at many things he saw and heard, and at times would venture to give his opinion, contradict, and even act in opposition to persons whom long experience and the approbation of the world, had placed in situations which claimed his implicit reverence and submission.

Unchanged in all his boyish graces, young William, now a man, was never known to infringe upon the statutes of good-breeding; even though sincerity, his own free will, duty to his neighbour, with many other plebeian virtues and privileges, were the sacrifice.

William inherited all the pride and ambition of the Dean; Henry all his father's humility. And yet, so various and extensive is the acceptation of the word pride, that, on some occasions, Henry was proud even beyond his cousin. He thought it far beneath his dignity ever to honour, or contemplate with awe, any human being in whom he saw numerous failings; nor would he, to ingratiate himself into the favour of a man above him, stoop to one servility such as the haughty William daily practised.



"I know I am called proud," said William, one day to Henry.

"Dear cousin," replied Henry, "it must be only, then, by those who do not know you; for to me you appear the humblest creature in the world."

"Do you really think so!"

"I am certain of it; or would you always give up your opinion to that of persons in a superior state, however inferior in their understanding? Would, else, their weak judgment immediately change yours, though, before, you had been decided on the opposite side? Now, indeed, cousin, I have more pride than you; for I never will stoop to act or to speak contrary to my feelings."

"Then you will never be a great man."

"Nor ever desire it, if I must first be a mean one."

There was in the public opinion of these two young men another mistake which the common retailers of character committed. Henry was said to be wholly negligent, while William was reputed to be extremely attentive to the other sex. William, indeed, was gallant, was amorous, and indulged his inclination to the libertine society of women; but Henry it was who *loved* them. He admired them at a reverential distance, and felt so tender an affection for the virtuous female, that it shocked him to behold, much more to associate with, the depraved and vicious.

In the advantages of person, Henry was still superior to William; and yet the latter had no common share of those attractions which captivate weak, thoughtless, or unskilful minds.



## CHAPTER XIX.

ABOUT the time that Henry and William quitted college, and had arrived at their twentieth year, the Dean purchased a small estate in a village near to the country residence of Lord and Lady Bendham; and, in the total want of society, the Dean's family were frequently honoured with invitations from the great house.

Lord Bendham, besides a good estate, possessed the office of a Lord of the Bedchamber to his Majesty. Historians do not ascribe much importance to the situation, or to the talents of nobles in this department, nor shall this little history. A lord of the bedchamber is a personage well-known in Courts, and in all capitals where Courts reside; with this advantage to the inquirer, that in becoming acquainted with one of those noble characters, he becomes acquainted with all the remainder; not only with those of the same kingdom, but those of foreign nations; for, in whatever land, in whatever clime, a lord of the bedchamber must necessarily be the self-same creature: one, wholly made up of observance, of obedience, of dependence, and of imitation—a borrowed character—a character formed by reflection.

The wife of this illustrious peer, as well as himself, took her hue, like the chameleon, from surrounding objects: her manners were not governed by her mind, but were solely directed by external circumstances. At Court, humble, resigned, patient, attentive: at balls, masquerades, gaming-



tables, and routs, gay, sprightly, and flippanant : at her country seat, reserved, austere, arrogant, and gloomy.

Though in town her timid eye, in presence of certain personages, would scarcely uplift its trembling lid, so much she felt her own insignificance ; yet, in the country, till Lady Clementina arrived, there was not one being of consequence enough to share in her acquaintance ; and she paid back to her inferiors there, all the humiliating slights, all the mortifications, which in London she received from those to whom *she* was inferior.

Whether in town or country, it is but justice to acknowledge, that in her own person she was strictly chaste ; but in the country she extended that chastity even to the persons of others ; and the young woman who had lost her virtue in the village of Anfield, had better have lost her life. Some few were now and then found hanging or drowned, while no other cause could be assigned for their despair, than an imputation on the discretion of their character, and dread of the harsh purity of Lady Bendham. She would remind the parish priest of the punishment allotted for female dishonour, and by her influence had caused many an unhappy girl to do public penance, in her own or the neighbouring church.

But this country rigour, in town, she could dispense withal ; and, like other ladies of virtue, she there visited and received into her house the acknowledged mistresses of any man in elevated life : it was not therefore the crime, but the rank which the criminal held in society, that drew down Lady Bendham's vengeance : she even carried her distinction of classes in female error to such a very nice point, that the adulterous concubine of an elder brother was her most intimate acquaintance, whilst the less guilty unmarried mistress of the younger she would not sully her lips to exchange a word with.



Lord and Lady Bendham's birth, education, talents, and character, being much on the same scale of eminence, they would have been a very happy pair, had not one great misfortune intervened, the lady never bore her lord a child, while every cottage of the village was crammed with half-starved children; whose fathers from week to week, from year to year, exerted their manly youth and wasted their strength in vain to protect them from hunger; whose mothers mourned over their new-born infants as little wretches sent into the world to deprive the rest of what already was too scanty for them. In the castle, which owned every cottage and all the surrounding land, and where one single day of feasting would have nourished for a month all the poor inhabitants of the parish, not one child was given to partake the plenty. The curse of barrenness was on the family of the Lord of the Manor—the curse of fruitfulness upon the famished poor.

This lord and lady, with an ample fortune, both by inheritance and their sovereign's favour, had never yet the economy to be exempt from debts; still, over their splendid, their profuse table, they could contrive and plan excellent schemes "how the poor might live most comfortably with a little better management."

The wages of a labouring man, with a wife and half a dozen small children, Lady Bendham thought quite sufficient, if they would only learn a little economy.

"You know, my Lord, these people never want to dress—shoes and stockings, a coat and waistcoat, a gown and a cap, a petticoat and a handkerchief, are all they want—fire, to be sure, in winter—then all the rest is merely for provision."

"I'll get a pen and ink," said young Henry, one day when he had the honour of being at their table, "and see what the *rest* amounts to."



"No, no accounts," cried my Lord, "no summing up: but if you were to calculate, you must add to the receipts of the poor my gift at Christmas—last year, during the frost, no less than a hundred pounds."

"How benevolent!" exclaimed the Dean.

"How prudent!" exclaimed Henry.

"What do you mean by prudent?" asked Lord Bendham.  
"Explain your meaning."

"No, my Lord," replied the Dean, "do not ask for an explanation: this youth is wholly unacquainted with our customs, and though a man in stature, is but a child in intellects. Henry, have not I often cautioned you——"

"Whatever his thoughts are upon this subject," cried Lord Bendham, "I desire to know them."

"Why, then, my Lord," answered Henry, "I thought it was prudent in you to give a little; lest the poor, driven to despair, should take all."

"And if they had, they would have been hanged."

"Hanging, my Lord, our history, or some tradition, says, was formerly adopted as a mild punishment, in place of starving."

"I am sure," cried Lady Bendham (who seldom spoke directly to the argument before her),—"I am sure they ought to think themselves much obliged to us."

"That is the greatest hardship of all," cried Henry.

"What, Sir?" exclaimed the Earl.

"I beg your pardon—my uncle looks displeased—I am very ignorant—I did not receive my first education in this country—and I find I think so differently from every one else, that I am ashamed to utter my sentiments."

"Never mind, young man," answered Lord Bendham; "we shall excuse your ignorance for once. Only inform us what it was you just now called *the greatest hardship of all*."

"It was, my Lord, that what the poor receive to keep



them from perishing, should pass under the name of *gifts* and *bounty*. Health, strength, and the will to earn a moderate subsistence, ought to be every man's security from obligation."

"I think a hundred pounds a great deal of money," cried Lady Bendham; "and I hope my Lord will never give it again."

"I hope so too," cried Henry; "for if my Lord would only be so good as to speak a few words for the poor, as a senator, he might possibly for the future keep his hundred pounds, and yet they never want it."

Lord Bendham had the good nature only to smile at Henry's simplicity, whispering to himself, "I had rather keep my——" His last word was lost in the whisper.



## CHAPTER XX.

IN the country—where the sensible heart is still more susceptible of impressions, and where the unfeeling mind, in the want of other men's wit to invent, forms schemes for its own amusement—our youths both fell in love: if passions, that were pursued on the most opposite principles, can receive the same appellation. William, well versed in all the licentious theory, thought himself in love, because he perceived a tumultuous impulse cause his heart to beat while his fancy fixed on a certain object, whose presence agitated yet more his breast.

Henry thought himself not in love, because, while he listened to William on the subject, he found their sensations did not in the least agree.

William owned to Henry that he loved Agnes, the daughter of a cottager in the village, and hoped to make her his mistress.

Henry felt that his tender regard for Rebecca, the daughter of the curate of the parish, did not inspire him even with the boldness to acquaint her with his sentiments; much less to meditate one design that might tend to her dishonour.

While William was cautiously planning how to meet in private, and accomplish the seduction of the object of his passion, Henry was endeavouring to fortify the object of *his* choice with every virtue. He never read a book from which



he received improvement, that he did not carry it to Rebecca—never heard a circumstance which might assist towards her moral instruction, that he did not haste to tell it her—and once, when William boasted—

“He knew he was beloved by Agnes,”—

Henry said, with equal triumph, “He had not dared to take the means to learn, nor had Rebecca dared to give one instance of her partiality.”

Rebecca was the youngest, and by far the least handsome daughter of four, to whom the Reverend Mr. Rymer, a widower, was father. The other sisters were accounted beauties; and she, from her comparative want of personal charms, having been less beloved by her parents, and less caressed by those who visited them than the rest, had, for some time past, sought other resources of happiness than the affection, praise, and indulgence of her fellow-creatures. The parsonage-house, in which this family lived, was the forlorn remains of an ancient abbey: it had, in later times, been the habitation of a rich and learned rector, by whom at his decease, a library was bequeathed for the use of every succeeding resident. Rebecca, left alone in this huge ruinous abode, while her sisters were paying stated visits in search of admiration, passed her solitary hours in reading. She not merely read—she thought; the choicest English books from this excellent library taught her to *think*; and reflection fashioned her mind to bear the slights, the mortifications of neglect, with a patient dejection, rather than with an indignant or a peevish spirit.

This resignation to injury and contumely gave to her perfect symmetry of person, a timid eye, a retiring manner, and spread upon her face a placid sweetness, a pale serenity indicating sense, which no wise connoisseur in female charms would have exchanged for all the sparkling eyes and florid tints of her vain and vulgar sisters. Henry’s soul was



so enamoured of her gentle deportment, that in his sight she appeared beautiful; while she, with an understanding competent to judge of his worth, was so greatly surprised, so prodigiously astonished at the distinction, the attention, the many offices of civility paid her by him, in preference to her idolized sisters, that her gratitude for such unexpected favours had sometimes (even in his presence, and in that of her family) nearly drowned her eyes with tears. Yet they were only trifles, in which Henry had the opportunity or the power to give her testimony of his regard—trifles, often more grateful to the sensible mind than efforts of high importance; and by which the proficient in the human heart will accurately trace a passion wholly concealed from the dull eye of the unskilled observer.

The first cause of amazement to Rebecca in the manners of Henry was, that he talked with *her* as well as with her sisters; no visitor else had done so. In appointing a morning's or an evening's walk, he proposed *her* going with the rest; no one had ever required her company before. When he called and she was absent, he asked where she was; no one had ever missed her before. She thanked him most sincerely, and soon perceived that, at those times when he was present, company was more pleasing even than books.

Her astonishment, her gratitude, did not stop here—Henry proceeded in attention—he soon selected her from her sisters, to tell her the news of the day; answered her observations the first; once gave her a sprig of myrtle from his bosom, in preference to another who had praised its beauty; and once—never-to-be-forgotten kindness—sheltered her from a hasty shower with his *parapluie*, while he lamented, to her drenched companions—

“That he had but *one* to offer.”

From a man whose understanding and person they ad-



mire, how dear, how impressive on the female heart is every trait of tenderness ! Till now, Rebecca had experienced none ; not even of the parental kind ; and merely from the overflowings of a kind nature (not in return for affection) had she ever loved her father and her sisters. Sometimes, repulsed by their severity, she transferred the fullness of an affectionate heart to birds, or the brute creation ; but now, her alienated mind was recalled and softened by a sensation that made her long to complain of the burden it imposed. Those obligations which exact silence, are a heavy weight to the grateful ; and Rebecca longed to tell Henry, "that even the forfeit of her life would be too little to express the full sense she had of the respect he paid to her." But, as modesty forbade not only every kind of declaration, but every insinuation purporting what she felt, she wept through sleepless nights from a load of suppressed explanation ; yet still she would not have exchanged this trouble for all the beauty of her sisters.



## CHAPTER XXI.

OLD John and Hannah Primrose, a prudent, hardy couple, who, by many years of peculiar labour and peculiar abstinence, were the least poor of all the neighbouring cottagers, had an only child (who has been named before) called Agnes; and this cottage girl was reckoned, in spite of the beauty of the elder Miss Rymers, by far the prettiest female in the village.

Reader of superior rank, if the passions which rage in the bosom of the inferior class of human kind are beneath your sympathy, throw aside this little history, for Rebecca Rymer and Agnes Primrose are its heroines.

But, you, unprejudiced reader, whose liberal observations are not confined to stations, but who consider all mankind alike deserving your investigation; who believe that there exist in some, knowledge without the advantage of instruction; refinement of sentiment independent of elegant society; honourable pride of heart, without dignity of blood; and genius destitute of art to render it conspicuous—*you* will, perhaps, venture to read on; in hopes that the remainder of this story may deserve your attention, just as the wild herb of the forest, equally with the cultivated plant in the garden, claims the attention of the botanist.

Young William saw in young Agnes even more beauty than was beheld by others; and on those days when he felt no inclination to ride, to shoot, or to hunt, he would contrive, by some secret device, the means to meet with her alone,



and give her tokens (if not of his love) at least of his admiration of her beauty, and of the pleasure he enjoyed in her company.

Agnes listened, with a kind of delirious enchantment, to all her elevated and eloquent admirer uttered; and in return for his praises of her charms, and his equivocal replies in respect to his designs towards her, she gave to him her most undisguised thoughts, and her whole enraptured heart.

This harmless intercourse (as she believed it) had not lasted many weeks before she loved him: she even confessed she did, every time that any unwonted mark of attention from him struck with unexpected force her infatuated senses.

It has been said by a celebrated writer, upon the affection subsisting between the two sexes, "that there are many persons who, if they had never heard of the passion of love, would never have felt it." Might it not, with equal truth, be added, that there are many more, who, having heard of it, and, believing most firmly that they feel it, are, nevertheless, mistaken? Neither of these cases was the lot of Agnes. She experienced the sentiment before she ever heard it named in the sense with which it had possessed her—joined with numerous other sentiments: for genuine love, however rated as the chief passion of the human heart, is but a poor dependent, a retainer upon other passions; admiration, gratitude, respect, esteem, pride in the object. Divest the boasted sensation of these, and it is no more than the impression of a twelvemonth, by courtesy, or vulgar error, termed love.

Agnes was formed, by the rarest structure of the human frame, and destined by the tenderest thrillings of the human soul, to inspire and to experience real love; but her nice taste, her delicate thoughts, were so refined beyond the



sphere of her own station in society, that nature would have produced this prodigy of attraction in vain, had not one of superior education and manners assailed her affections; and had she been accustomed to the conversation of men in William's rank of life, she had, perhaps, treated William's addresses with indifference; but, in comparing him with her familiar acquaintance, he was a miracle! His unremitting attention seemed the condescension of an elevated being, to whom she looked up with reverence, with admiration, with awe, with pride, with sense of obligation—and all those various passions which constitute true and *never-to-be-eradicat*ed love.

But in vain she felt, and even avowed with her lips, what every look and gesture had long denoted; William, with discontent, sometimes with anger, upbraided her for her false professions, and vowed "that while one tender proof, which he fervently besought, was wanting, she did but aggravate his misery by less endearments."

Agnes had been taught the full estimation of female virtue; and if her nature could have detested any one creature in a state of wretchedness, it would have been the woman who had lost her honour: yet, for William, what would not Agnes forfeit? The dignity, the peace, the serenity, the innocence of her own mind, love soon encouraged her to fancy she could easily forego—and this same overpowering influence at times so forcibly possessed her, that she even felt a momentary transport in the contemplation "of so precious a sacrifice to him." But then she loved her parents, and their happiness she could not prevail with herself to barter even for *his*. She wished he would demand some other pledge of her attachment to him; for there was none but this, her ruin in no other shape, that she would deny at his request. While thus she deliberated, she prepared for her fall.



Bred up with strict observance both of his moral and religious character, William did not dare to tell an unequivocal lie even to his inferiors—he never promised Agnes he would marry her; nay, even, he paid so much respect to the forms of truth, that no sooner was it evident that he had obtained her heart, her whole soul entire—so that loss of innocence would be less terrifying than separation from him—no sooner did he perceive this, than he candidly told her he “could never make her his wife.” At the same time he lamented “the difference of their births, and the duty he owed his parents’ hopes,” in terms so pathetic to her partial ear, that she thought him a greater object of compassion in his attachment even than herself; and was now urged by pity to remove the cause of his complainings.

One evening, Henry accidentally passed the lonely spot where William and she constantly met. He observed his cousin’s impassioned eye, and her affectionate yet fearful glance. William, he saw, took delight in the agitation of mind, in the strong apprehension mixed with the love of Agnes. This convinced Henry that either he or himself was not in love; for his heart told him he would not have beheld such emotions of tenderness, mingled with such marks of sorrow upon the countenance of Rebecca, for the wealth of the universe.

The first time he was alone with William after this, he mentioned his observation on Agnes’s apparent affliction, and asked “Why her grief was the result of their stolen meetings.”

“Because,” replied William, “her professions are unlimited, while her manners are reserved; and I accuse her of loving me with unkind moderation, while I love her to distraction.”

“You design to marry her, then?”

“How can you degrade me by the supposition?”



"Would it degrade you more to marry her than to make her your companion? To talk with her for hours in preference to all other company? To wish to be endeared to her by still closer ties?"

"But all this is not raising her to the rank of my wife."

"It is still raising her to that rank for which wives alone were allotted."

"You talk wildly! I tell you I love her; but not enough, I hope, to marry her."

"But too much, I hope, to undo her?"

"That must be her own free choice—I make use of no unwarrantable methods."

"What are the warrantable ones?"

"I mean I have made her no false promises—offered no pretended settlement—vowed no eternal constancy."

"But you have told her you love her; and, from that confession, has she not reason to expect every protection which even promises could secure?"

"I cannot answer for her expectations; but I know if she should make me as happy as I ask, and I should then forsake her, I shall not break my word."

"Still she will be deceived; for you will falsify your looks."

"Do you think she depends on my looks?"

"I have read in some book, *Looks are the lover's sole dependence.*"

"I have no objection to her interpreting mine in her favour; but then, for the consequences, she will have herself, and only herself, to blame."

"Oh, Heaven!"

"What makes you exclaim so vehemently?"

"A forcible idea of the bitterness of that calamity which inflicts self-reproach! Oh, rather deceive her—leave her the consolation to reproach *you* rather than *herself*."



"My honour will not suffer me."

"Exert your honour, and never see her more."

"I cannot live without her."

"Then live with her by the laws of your country; and make her and yourself both happy."

"Am I to make my father and my mother miserable? They would disown me for such a step."

"Your mother, perhaps, might be offended, but your father could not. Remember the sermon he preached but last Sunday, upon *the shortness of this life—contempt of all riches and worldly honours in balance with a quiet conscience*—and the assurance he gave us *that the greatest happiness enjoyed upon earth, was to be found under an humble roof, with heaven in prospect.*"

"My father is a very good man," said William, "and yet, instead of being satisfied with an humble roof, he looks impatiently forward to a bishop's palace."

"He is so very good, then," said Henry, "that perhaps, seeing the dangers to which men in exalted stations are exposed, he has such extreme philanthropy, and so little self-love, he would rather that *himself* should brave those perils incidental to wealth and grandeur, than any other person."

"You are not yet civilised," said William; "and to argue with you, is but to instruct without gaining instruction."

"I know, Sir," replied Henry, "that you are studying the law most assiduously, and indulge flattering hopes of rising to eminence in your profession; but let me hint to you, that though you may be perfect in the knowledge how to administer the commandments of men, unless you keep in view the precepts of God, your judgment, like mine, will be fallible."



## CHAPTER XXII.

THE Dean's family passed this first summer at the newly-purchased estate so pleasantly, that they left it with regret when winter called them to their house in town.

But if some felt concern in quitting the village of Anfield, others who were left behind, felt the deepest anguish. Those were not the poor; for rigid attention to the religion and morals of people in poverty, and total neglect of their bodily wants, was the Dean's practice. He forced them to attend church every Sabbath; but whether they had a dinner on their return, was too gross and temporal an inquiry for his spiritual fervour. Good of the soul was all he aimed at; and this pious undertaking, besides his diligence as a pastor, required all his exertion as a magistrate; for to be very poor and very honest, very oppressed yet very thankful, is a degree of sainted excellence not often to be attained without the aid of zealous men to frighten into virtue.

Those, then, who alone felt sorrow at the Dean's departure, were two young women, whose parents, exempt from indigence, preserved them from suffering under his un pitying piety; but whose discretion had not protected them from the bewitching smiles of his nephew, and the seducing wiles of his son.

The first morning that Rebecca rose and knew Henry was gone till the following summer, she wished she could have laid down again, and slept away the whole long interval. Her sisters' peevishness, her father's austerity, she



foresaw would be insupportable, now that she had experienced Henry's kindness, and he was no longer near to fortify her patience. She sighed — she wept — she was unhappy.

But, if Rebecca awoke with a dejected mind and an aching heart, what were the sorrows of Agnes? The only child of doting parents, she had never been taught the necessity of resignation—untutored, unread, unused to reflect, but knowing how to *feel*; what were her sufferings, when, on waking, she called to mind that "William was gone?" and with him, gone all that excess of happiness which his presence had bestowed, and for which she had exchanged her future tranquility.

Loss of tranquility even Rebecca had to bemoan: Agnes had still more—the loss of innocence.

Had William remained in the village, shame, even conscience, perhaps, might have been silenced; but, separated from her betrayer, parted from the joys of guilt, and left only to its sorrows, every sting which quick sensibility could sharpen, to torture her, was transfixed in her heart. First came the recollection of a cold farewell from the man whose love she had hoped her yielding passion had for ever won; next flashed on her thoughts her violated person; next, the crime incurred; then her cruelty to her parents; and, last of all, the horrors of detection.

She knew that as yet, by wariness, care, and contrivance, her meetings with William had been unsuspected; but, in this agony of mind, her fears foreboded an informer who would defy all caution; who would stigmatise her with a name — dear and desired by every virtuous female — abhorrent to the blushing harlot — the name of mother.

That Agnes, thus impressed, could rise from her bed, meet her parents and her neighbours with her usual smile



of vivacity, and voice of mirth, was impossible. To leave her bed at all, to creep down stairs, and reply in a faint, broken voice to questions asked, were, in her state of mind, mighty efforts, and they were all to which her struggles could attain, for many weeks.

William had promised to write to her while he was away; he kept his word; but not till the end of two months did she receive a letter. Fear for his health, apprehension of his death during this cruel interim, caused an agony of suspense, which, by representing him to her distracted fancy in a state of suffering, made him, if possible, still dearer to her. In the excruciating anguish of uncertainty, she walked with trembling steps, through all weathers (when she could steal half a day, while her parents were employed in labour abroad), to the post-town, at six miles distance, to inquire for his long-expected, long wished-for letter. When at last it was given to her, that moment of consolation seemed to repay her for the whole time of agonising terror she had endured.

“He is alive!” she said, “and I have suffered nothing.”

She hastily put this token of his health and his remembrance of her into her bosom, rich as an empress with a newly-acquired dominion. The way from home, which she had trod with heavy pace, in the fear of renewed disappointment, she skimmed along on her return, swift as a doe: the cold did not pierce, neither did the rain wet her. Many a time she put her hand upon the prize she possessed, to find if it were safe: once, on the road, she took it from her bosom, curiously viewed the seal and the direction, then replacing it, did not move her fingers from their fast gripe, till she arrived at her own house.

Her father and her mother were still absent. She drew a chair, and placing it near to the only window in the room, seated herself with ceremonious order; then gently drew



forth her treasure; laid it on her knee; and, with a smile that almost amounted to a laugh of gladness, once more inspected the outward part, before she would trust herself with the excessive joy of looking within.

At length the seal was broken—but the contents still a secret. Poor Agnes had learned to write as some youths learn Latin: so short a time had been allowed for the acquirement, and so little expert had been her master, that it took her generally a week to write a letter of ten lines, and a month to read one of twenty. But this being a letter on which her mind was deeply engaged, her whole imagination aided her slender literature, and at the end of a fortnight she had made out every word. They were these:—

“DEAR AGNES,—I hope you have been well since we parted: I have been very well myself; but I have been teased with a great deal of business, which has not given me time to write to you before. I have been called to the bar, which engages every spare moment; but I hope it will not prevent my coming down to Anfield with my father in the summer.

“I am, DEAR AGNES,

“With gratitude for all the favours you  
have conferred on me,

“Yours, &c.,

“W. N.”

To have beheld the illiterate Agnes trying for two weeks, day and night, to find out the exact words of this letter, would have struck the spectator with amazement, had he also understood the right, the delicate, the nicely proper sensation with which she was affected by every sentence it contained.



She wished it had been kinder, even for his sake who wrote it ; because she thought so well of him, and desired still to think so well, that she was sorry at any faults which rendered him less worthy of her good opinion. The cold civility of his letter had this effect—her clear, her acute judgment felt it a kind of prevarication *to promise to write—and then write nothing that was hoped for*. But, enthralled by the magic of her passion, she shortly found excuses for the man she loved, at the expense of her own condemnation.

“ He has only the fault of inconstancy,” she cried ; “ and that has been caused by *my* change of conduct. Had I been virtuous still, he had still been affectionate.”

Bitter reflection !

Yet there was a sentence in the letter that, worse than all the tenderness left out, wounded her sensibility ; and she could not read the line, *gratitude for all the favours conferred on me*, without turning pale with horror, then kindling with indignation at the common-place thanks which insultingly reminded her of her innocence given in exchange for unmeaning acknowledgments.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

ABSENCE is said to increase strong and virtuous love, but to destroy that which is weak and sensual. In the parallel between young William and young Henry, this was the case; for Henry's real love increased, while William's turbulent passion declined in separation. Yet had the latter not so much abated that he did not perceive a sensation, like a sudden shock of sorrow, on a proposal made him by his father, of entering the marriage state with a young woman, the dependent niece of Lady Bendham; who, as the Dean informed him, had signified her Lord's and her own approbation of his becoming their nephew.

At the first moment William received this intimation from his father, his heart revolted with disgust from the object, and he instantly thought upon Agnes, with more affection than he had done for many weeks before. This was from the comparison between her and his proposed wife, for he had frequently seen Miss Sedgely at Lord Bendham's, but had never seen in her whole person, or manners, the least attraction to excite his love. He pictured to himself an unpleasant home, with a companion so little suited to his taste, and he felt a pang of conscience, as well as of attachment, in the thought of giving up for ever his poor Agnes.

But these reflections, these feelings, lasted only for the



moment: no sooner had the Dean explained why the marriage was desirable, recited what great connections and what great patronage it would confer upon their family, than William listened with eagerness, and both his love and his conscience were, if not wholly quieted, at least for the present hushed.

Immediately after the Dean had expressed to Lord and Lady Bendham his son's "sense of the honour and the happiness conferred on him, by their condescension in admitting him a member of their noble family"—Miss Sedgeley received from her aunt nearly the same shock as William had done from his father. *For she* (placed in the exact circumstance of her intended husband) *had frequently seen the Dean's son at Lord Bendham's, but had never seen in his whole person or manners the least attraction to excite her love. She pictured to herself an unpleasant home, with a companion so little suited to her taste:* and at this moment she felt a more than usual partiality to the Dean's nephew, finding the secret hope she had long indulged, of winning his affections, so near being thwarted.

But Miss Sedgeley was too much subjected to the power of her uncle and aunt to have a will of her own,—at least, to dare to utter it. She received the commands of Lady Bendham with her accustomed submission, while all the consolation for the grief they gave her was, "that she resolved to make a very bad wife."

"I shall not care a pin for my husband," said she to herself; "and so I will dress and visit, and do just as I like—he dares not be unkind because of my aunt. Besides, now I think again, it is not so disagreeable to marry *him* as if I were obliged to marry into any other family, because I shall see his cousin Henry as often, if not oftener, than ever."



For Miss Sedgeley—whose person he did not like, and with her mind thus disposed—William began to force himself to shake off every little remaining affection, even all pity, for the unfortunate, the beautiful, the sensible, the doting Agnes ; and determined to place in a situation to look down with scorn upon her sorrows, this weak, this unprincipled woman.

Connections, interest, honours, were powerful advocates ; his private happiness William deemed trivial, compared to public opinion ; and to be under obligations to a peer, his wife's relation, gave greater renown in his servile mind than all the advantages which might accrue from his own intrinsic independent worth.

In the usual routine of pretended regard, and real indifference, sometimes disgust, between parties allied by what is falsely termed *prudence*, the intended union of Mr. Norwynne with Miss Sedgeley proceeded in all due form ; and at their country seats at Anfield, during the summer, their nuptials were appointed to be celebrated.

William was now introduced into all Lord Bendham's courtly circles : his worldly soul was entranced in glare and show ; he thought of nothing but places, pensions, titles, retinues ; and steadfast, alert, unshaken to the pursuit of honours, neglected not the lesser means of rising to preferment—his own endowments. But in this round of attention to pleasures and to study, he no more complained to Agnes of "excess of business." Cruel as she had once thought that letter in which he thus apologized for slighting her, she at last began to think it was wondrous kind ; for he never found time to send her another. Yet she had studied with all her most anxious care to write him an answer ; such a one as might not lessen her understanding, which he had often praised, in his esteem.



Ah, William! even with less anxiety your beating, ambitious heart panted for the admiration of an attentive auditory, when you first ventured to harangue in public! With far less hope and fear (great as yours were) did you first address a crowded court, and thirst for its approbation on your efforts, than Agnes sighed for your approval, when she took a pen and awkwardly scrawled over a sheet of paper. Near twenty times she began—but to a gentleman—and one she loved like William—what could she dare to say? Yet she had enough to tell, if shame had not interposed—or if remaining confidence in his affection had but encouraged her.

Overwhelmed by the first, and deprived of the last, her hand shook, her head drooped, and she dared not communicate what she knew must inevitably render her letter unpleasing; and still more depreciate her in his regard, as the occasion of incumbrance, and of injury to his moral reputation.

Her free, her liberal, her venturous spirit subdued, intimidated by the force of affection, she only wrote—

“SIR,—I am sorry you have so much to do, and should be ashamed if you put it off to write to me. I have not been at all well this winter—I never before passed such a one in all my life, and I hope you will never know such a one yourself in regard to not being happy—I should be sorry if you did—think I would rather go through it again myself than you should.

“I long for the summer, the fields are so green, and everything so pleasant at that time of the year: I always do long for the summer, but I think never so much in my life as for this that is coming—though sometimes I wish that last summer had never come.



Perhaps you wish so too—and that this summer would not come either.

“Hope you will excuse all faults, as I never learnt but one month.

“Your obedient humble servant,

“A. P.”



## CHAPTER XXIV.

SUMMER arrived—and lords and ladies, who had partaken of all the dissipation of the town, whom opera-houses, gaming-houses, and various other houses, had detained whole nights from their peaceful home, were now poured forth from the metropolis, to imbibe the wholesome air of the farmer and peasant, and disseminate, in return, moral and religious principles.

Among the rest, Lord and Lady Bendham, strenuous opposers of vice in the poor, and gentle supporters of it in the rich, never played at cards, or had concerts on a Sunday, in the village, where the poor were spies ; *he*, there, never gamed, nor drank, except in private ; and *she* banished from her doors every woman of sullied character. Yet poverty and idiotism are not the same : the poor can hear, can talk, sometimes can reflect ; servants will tell their equals how they live in town ; listeners will smile and shake their heads ; and thus hypocrisy, instead of cultivating destroys every seed of moral virtue.

The arrival of Lord Bendham's family at Anfield announced to the village that the Dean's would quickly follow. Rebecca's heart bounded with joy at the prospect. Poor Agnes felt a sinking, a foreboding tremour, that wholly interrupted the joy of *her* expectations. She had not



heard from William for five tedious months : she did not know whether he loved or despised—whether he thought of or had forgotten her. Her reason argued against the hope that he loved her ; yet hope still subsisted ; she would not abandon herself to despair while there was doubt : she “ had frequently been deceived by the appearance of circumstances ; and perhaps he might come all kindness, perhaps even not like her the less for that indisposition which had changed her bloom to paleness, and the sparkling of her eyes to a pensive languor.”

Henry’s sensations, on his return to Anfield, were the self-same as Rebecca’s were—sympathy in thought, sympathy in affection, sympathy in virtue, made them so. As he approached the little village, he felt more light than usual. He had committed no trespass there, dreaded no person’s reproach or inquiries ; but his arrival might prove, at least to one object, the cause of rejoicing.

William’s sensations were the reverse of these. In spite of his ambition, and the flattering view of one day accomplishing all to which it aspired, he often, as they proceeded on their journey, envied the gaiety of Henry, and felt an inward monitor, that told him “ he must first act like Henry, to be as happy.”

His intended marriage was still, to the families of both parties (except to the heads of the houses) a profound secret. Neither the servants, nor even Henry, had received the slightest intimation of the designed alliance ; and this to William was matter of some comfort.

When men submit to act in contradiction to their principles, nothing is so precious as a secret. In their estimation, to have their conduct *known* is the essential mischief ; while it is hid, they fancy the sin but half committed ; and to the moiety of a crime they reconcile their feelings, till, in progression, the whole, when disclosed, appears trivial. He



designed that Agnes should receive the news from himself by degrees, and in such a manner as to console her, or at least to silence her complaints; and, with a wish to soften the regret which he still felt on the prudent necessity of yielding her wholly up when his marriage should take place, he promised to himself some intervening hours of private meetings, which he hoped would produce satiety.

While Henry flew to Mr. Rymer's house with a conscience clear, and a face enlightened with gladness; while he met Rebecca with open-hearted friendship and frankness, which charmed her soul to peaceful happiness; William skulked around the cottage of Agnes, dreading detection; and when, towards midnight, he found the means to obtain the company of the sad inhabitant, he grew so impatient at her tears and sobs, at the delicacy with which she withheld her caresses, that he burst into bitter upbraidings at her coyness, and at length (without discovering the cause of her peculiar agitation and reserve) abruptly left her, vowing "never to see her more."

As he turned away, his heart even congratulated him "that he had made so discreet a use of his momentary disappointment as thus to shake her off at once without farther explanation or excuse."

She, ignorant and illiterate as she was, knew enough of her own heart to judge of his, and to know that such violent affections and expressions, above all, such a sudden, heart-breaking manner of departure, were not the effects of love, nor even of humanity. She felt herself debased by a ruffian; yet still, having loved him when she thought him a far different character, the blackest proof of the deception could not erase a sentiment formed whilst she was deceived.

She passed the remainder of the night in anguish; but with the cheerful morning some cheery thoughts consoled her. She thought "perhaps William by this time had found



himself to blame, and had conceived the cause of her grief and her distant behaviour, and had pitied her."

The next evening she waited with anxious heart for the signal that had called her out the foregoing night. In vain she watched, counted the hours and the stars, and listened to the nightly stillness of the fields around. They were not disturbed by the tread of her lover. Daylight came; the sun rose in its splendour; William had not been near her, and it shone upon none so miserable as Agnes.

She now considered his word, "never to see her more," as solemnly passed. She heard anew the impressive, the implacable tone in which the sentence was pronounced, and could look back on no late token of affection on which to found the slightest hope that he would recall it.

Still reluctant to despair—in the extremity of grief, in the extremity of fear for an approaching crisis which must speedily arrive—she, after a few days had elapsed, trusted a neighbouring peasant with a letter to deliver to Mr. Norwynne in private.

This letter, unlike the last, was dictated without the hope to please. No pains were taken with the style, no care in the formation of the letters. The words flowed from necessity; strong necessity guided her hand.

"SIR,—I beg your pardon—pray don't forsake me all at once—see me one time more—I have something to tell you—it is what I dare tell nobody else—and what I am ashamed to tell you—yet pray give me a word of advice—what to do I don't know—I then will part, if you please, never to trouble you, never any more—but hope to part friends—pray do, if you please—and see me one time more.

"Your obedient,

"A. P."



These incorrect, inelegant lines produced this immediate reply:—

“TO AGNES PRIMROSE.

“I have often told you that my honour is as dear to me as my life. My word is a part of that honour—you heard me say *I would never see you again*. I shall keep my word.”



## CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN the Dean's family had been at Anfield about a month, one misty morning, such as portends a sultry day, as Henry was walking swiftly through a thick wood, on the skirts of the parish, he suddenly started on hearing a distant groan, expressive, as he thought, both of bodily and mental pain. He stopped to hear it repeated, that he might pursue the sound. He heard it again; and though now but in murmurs, yet, as the tone implied excessive grief, he directed his course to that part of the wood from which it came.

As he advanced, in spite of the thick fog, he discerned the appearance of a female stealing away on his approach. His eye was fixed on this object; and, regardless where he placed his feet, he soon shrunk back with horror on perceiving they had nearly trod on a new-born infant, lying on the ground! a lovely male child, entered on a world where not one preparation had been made to receive him.

"Ah!" cried Henry, forgetting the person who had fled, and, with a smile of compassion on the helpless infant, "I am glad I have found you; you give more joy to me than you have done to your hapless parents. Poor dear," continued he, while he took off his coat to wrap it in, "I will take care of you while I live; I will beg for you rather than you shall want—but first I will carry you to those who can at present do more for you than myself."

Thus Henry said and thought, while he enclosed the child carefully in his coat, and took it in his arms. But, proceed-



ing to walk his way with it, an unlucky query struck him, *where he should go.*

"I must not take it to the Dean's," he cried, "because Lady Clementina will suspect it is not nobly, and my uncle will suspect it is not lawfully, born. Nor must I take it to Lord Bendham's for the self-same reason; though, could it call Lady Bendham mother, this whole village, nay, the whole country round, would ring with rejoicings for its birth. How strange!" continued he, "that we should make so little of human creatures, that one sent among us, wholly independent of his own high value, becomes a curse, instead of a blessing, by the mere accident of circumstances."

He now, after walking out of the wood, peeped through the folds of his coat to look again at his charge. He started, turned pale, and trembled to behold what, in the surprise of first seeing the child, had escaped his observation. Around its little throat was a cord, entwined by a slipping noose, and drawn half-way, as if the trembling hand of the murderer had revolted from its dreadful office, and he or she had left the infant to pine away in nakedness and hunger rather than see it die.

Again Henry wished himself joy of the treasure he had found; and more frequently than before; for he had not only preserved one fellow-creature from death, but another from murder.

Once more he looked at his charge, and was transported to observe upon its serene brow and sleepy eye no traces of the dangers it had passed; no trace of shame, either for itself or its parents; no discomposure at the unwelcome reception it was likely to encounter from a proud world. He now slipped the fatal string from its neck; and, by this affectionate disturbance, causing the child to cry, he ran (but he scarcely knew whither) to convey it to a better nurse.



He at length found himself at the door of his dear Rebecca: for so very happy Henry felt at the good luck which had befallen him, that he longed to bestow a part of the blessing upon her he loved.

He sent for her privately out of the house, to speak to him. When she came—

“Rebecca,” said he (looking around that no one observed him),—“Rebecca, I have brought you something you will like.”

“What is it?” she asked.

“You know, Rebecca, that you love deserted birds, strayed kittens, and motherless lambs. I have brought something more pitiable than any of these. Go, get a cap, and a little gown, and then I will give it you.”

“A gown!” exclaimed Rebecca. “If you have brought me a monkey, much as I should esteem any present from *you*, indeed I cannot touch it.”

“A monkey!” repeated Henry, almost in anger: then, changing the tone of his voice, exclaimed in triumph, “It is a child!”

On this he gave it a gentle pinch, that its cry might confirm the pleasing truth he spoke.

“A child!” repeated Rebecca, in amaze.

“Yes; and indeed I found it.”

“Found it!”

“Indeed I did. The mother, I fear, had just forsaken it.”

“Inhuman creature!”

“Nay, hold, Rebecca! I am sure you will pity her when you see her child; you then will know she must have loved it; and you will consider how much she certainly had suffered, before she left it to perish in a wood.”

“Cruel!” once more exclaimed Rebecca.

“Oh, Rebecca, perhaps, had she possessed a home of her



own, she would have given it the best place in it; had she possessed money, she would have dressed it with the nicest care; or, had she been accustomed to disgrace, she would have gloried in calling it hers! But now, as it is, it is sent to us—to you and me, Rebecca, to take care of.”

Rebecca, soothed by Henry’s compassionate eloquence, held out her arms, and received the important parcel; and, as she kindly looked in upon the little stranger—

“Now, are not you much obliged to me,” said Henry, “for having brought it to you? I know no one but yourself to whom I would have trusted it with pleasure.”

“Much obliged to you,” repeated Rebecca, with a very serious face, “if I did but know what to do with it—where to put it—where to hide it from my father and sisters.”

“Oh, anywhere,” returned Henry. “It is very good—it will not cry. Besides, in one of the distant, unfrequented rooms of your old abbey, through the thick walls and long gallery, an infant’s cry cannot pass. Yet, pray be cautious how you conceal it; for if it should be discovered by your father or sisters, they will take it from you, prosecute the wretched mother, and send the child to the parish.”

“I will do all I can to prevent them,” said Rebecca; “and I think I call to mind a part of the house where it *must* be safe. I know, too, I can take milk from the dairy, and bread from the pantry, without their being missed, or my father much the poorer. But if——”

That instant they were interrupted by the appearance of the stern curate at a little distance. Henry was obliged to run swiftly away, while Rebecca returned by stealth into the house with her innocent burden.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE is a word in the vocabulary more bitter, more direful in its import, than all the rest. Reader, if poverty, if disgrace, if bodily pain, even if slighted love be your unhappy fate, kneel and bless Heaven for its beneficent influence, so that you are not tortured with the anguish of—*remorse*.

Deep contrition for past offences had long been the punishment of unhappy Agnes ; but, till the day she brought her child into the world, *remorse* had been averted. From that day, life became an insupportable load, for all reflection was torture. To think, merely to think, was to suffer excruciating agony ; yet never before was *thought* so intrusive ; it haunted her in every spot, in all discourse or company ; sleep was no shelter—she never slept but her racking dreams told her—“ she had slain her infant.”

They presented to her view the naked innocent whom she had longed to press to her bosom, while she lifted up her hand against its life. They laid before her the piteous babe whom her eye-balls strained to behold once more, while her feet hurried her away for ever.

Often had Agnes, by the winter's fire, listened to tales of ghosts—of the unceasing sting of a guilty conscience ; often had she shuddered at the recital of murders ; often had she wept over the story of the innocent put to death, and stood aghast that the human mind could premeditate the heinous crime of assassination !



From the tenderest passion the most savage impulse may arise; in the deep recesses of fondness sometimes is implanted the root of cruelty; and from loving William with unbounded, lawless affection, she found herself depraved so as to become the very object which could most of all excite her own horror.

Still, at delirious intervals, that passion which, like a fatal talisman, had enchanted her whole soul, held out the delusive prospect that "William might yet relent;" for, though she had for ever discarded the hope of peace, she could not force herself to think but that, again blessed with his society, she should, at least for the time that he was present with her, taste the sweet cup of "forgetfulness of the past," for which she so ardently thirsted.

"Should he return to me," she thought, in those paroxysms of delusion, "I would to *him* unbosom all my guilt; and, as a remote, a kind of unwary accomplice in my crime, his sense, his arguments, ever ready in making light of my sins, might afford a respite to my troubled conscience."

While thus she unwittingly thought, and sometimes watched through the night, starting with convulsed rapture at every sound, because it might possibly be the harbinger of him, he was busied in carefully looking over marriage articles, fixing the place of residence with his destined bride, or making love to her in formal process. Yet, Agnes, vaunt! He sometimes thought on thee; he could not witness the folly, the weakness, the vanity, the selfishness, of his future wife, without frequently comparing her with thee. When equivocal words and prevaricating sentences, fell from her lips, he remembered with a sigh thy candour, that open sincerity which dwelt upon thy tongue, and seemed to vie with thy undisguised features to charm the listener, even beyond the spectator. While Miss Sedgely eagerly



grasped at all the gifts he offered, he could not but call to mind "that Agnes's declining hand was always closed, and her looks forbidding, every time he proffered such disrespectful tokens of his love." He recollected the softness which beamed from her eyes, the blush on her face at his approach, while he could never discern one glance of tenderness from the niece of Lord Bendham; and the artificial bloom on her cheeks was nearly as disgusting as the ill-conducted artifice with which she attempted gentleness and love.

But all these impediments were only observed as trials of his fortitude; his prudence could overcome his aversion, and thus he valued himself upon his manly firmness.

'T was now that William, being rid, by the peevishness of Agnes, most honourably of all future ties to her, and the day of his marriage with Miss Sedgeley being fixed, that Henry, with the rest of the house, learnt what to them was news. The first dart of Henry's eye upon his cousin, when, in his presence, he was told of the intended union, caused a reddening on the face of the latter. He always fancied Henry saw his thoughts; and he knew that Henry in return would give him *his*. On the present occasion, no sooner were they alone, and Henry began to utter them, than William charged him—

"Not to dare to proceed; for that, too long accustomed to trifle, the time was come when serious matters could alone employ his time; and when men of approved sense must take place of friends and confidants like him."

Henry replied, "The love, the sincerity of friends, I thought were their best qualities; these I possess."

"But you do not possess knowledge."

"If that be knowledge which has of late estranged you from all who bear you a sincere affection, which imprints every day more and more upon your features the marks of gloomy inquietude, am I not happier in my ignorance?"



"Do not torment me with your ineffectual reasoning."

"I called at the cottage of poor Agnes the other day," returned Henry: "her father and mother were taking their homely meal alone; and when I asked for their daughter, they wept, and said, 'Agnes was not the girl she had been.'"

William cast his eyes on the floor.

Henry proceeded:—"They said a sickness, which they feared would bring her to the grave, had preyed upon her for some time past. They had procured a doctor; but no remedy was found, and they feared the worst."

"What worst?" cried William (now recovered from the effect of the sudden intelligence, and attempting a smile), "do they think she will die? And do you think it will be for love? We do not hear of these deaths often, Henry."

"And if *she* die, who will hear of *that*? No one but those interested to conceal the cause; and thus it is that dying for love becomes a phenomenon."

Henry would have pursued the discourse farther; but William, impatient on all disputes, except where his argument was the better one, retired from the controversy, crying out, "I know my duty, and want no instructor."

It would be unjust to William to say he did not feel for this reported illness of Agnes: he felt during that whole evening, and part of the next morning; but business, pleasures, new occupations, and new schemes of future success, crowded to dissipate all unwelcome reflections; and he trusted to her youth, her health, her animal spirits, and, above all, to the folly of the gossip's story of *dying for love*, as a surety for her life, and a safeguard for his conscience.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE child of William and Agnes was secreted, by Rebecca, in a distant chamber belonging to the dreary parsonage, near to which scarcely any part of the family ever went. There she administered to all its wants, visited it every hour of the day, and at intervals, during the night, viewed almost with the joy of a mother its health, its promised life,—and, in a short time, found she loved her little gift better than any thing on earth, except the giver.

Henry called the next morning, and the next, and many succeeding times, in hopes of an opportunity to speak alone with Rebecca, to inquire concerning her charge, and consult when, and how, he could privately relieve her from her trust, as he now meant to procure a nurse for wages. In vain he called or lurked around the house ; for near five weeks all the conversation he could obtain with her was in the company of her sisters, who, beginning to observe his preference, his marked attention to her, and the languid, half-smothered transport with which she received it, indulged their envy and resentment at the contempt shown to their charms, by watching her steps when he was away, and her every look and whisper while he was present.

For five weeks, then, he was continually thwarted in his expectation of meeting her alone ; and at the end of that period, the whole design he had to accomplish by such a meeting was rendered abortive.



Though Rebecca had, with strictest caution, locked the door of the room in which the child was hid, and covered each crevice, and every aperture through which sound might more easily proceed; though she had surrounded the infant's head with pillows, to obstruct all noise from his crying, yet one unlucky night, the strength of his voice increasing with his age, he was heard by the maid, who slept the nearest to that part of the house.

Not meaning to injure her young mistress, the servant next morning simply related to the family what sound<sup>s</sup> had struck her ear during the night, and whence they proceeded. At first she was ridiculed "for supposing herself awake, when in reality she must be dreaming." But steadfastly persisting in what she had said, and Rebecca's blushes, confusion, and eagerness to prove the maid mistaken, giving suspicion to her charitable sisters, they watched her the very next time she went by stealth to supply the office of a mother; and breaking abruptly on her, while feeding and caressing the infant, they instantly concluded it was her *own*, seized it, and, in spite of her entreaties, carried it down to her father.

That account which Henry had given Rebecca "of his having found the child," and which her own sincerity, joined to the faith she had in his word, made her receive as truth, she now felt would be heard by the present auditors with contempt, even with indignation, as a falsehood. Her affright is easier conceived than described.

Accused, and forced by her sisters along with the child before the curate, his attention to their representation, his crimsoned face, knit brow, and thundering voice, struck with terror her very soul. Innocence is not always a protection against fear — sometimes it is less bold than guilt.

In her father and sisters she saw, she knew, the sus-



picious, partial, cruel, boisterous natures by whom she was to be judged ; and timid, gentle, oppressed, she fell trembling on her knees, and could only articulate—

“Forgive me !”

The curate would not listen to this supplication till she had replied to his question, “Whose child is this?”

She replied, “I do not know.”

Questioned louder, and with more violence still, “How the child came there, wherefore her affection for it, and whose it was?” she felt the improbability of the truth still more forcibly than before, and dreaded some immediate peril from her father’s rage, should she dare to relate an apparent lie. She paused to think upon a more probable tale than the real one, and as she hesitated, shook in every limb, while her father exclaimed—

“I understand the cause of this terror : it confirms your sisters’ fears, and your own shame. From your infancy I have predicted that some fatal catastrophe would befall you. I never loved you like my other children—I never had the cause : you were always unlike the rest, and I knew your fate would be calamitous ; but the very worst of my forebodings did not come to this—so young, so guilty, and so artful ! Tell me this instant, are you married ?”

Rebecca answered, “No.”

The sisters lifted up their hands.

The father continued—“Vile creature ! I thought as much. Still I will know the father of this child.”

She cast up her eyes to Heaven, and firmly vowed she “did not know herself ; nor who the mother was.”

“This is not to be borne !” exclaimed the curate in fury. “Persist in this, and you shall never see my face again. Both your child and you I’ll turn out of my house instantly, unless you confess your crime, and own the father.”



Curious to know this secret, the sisters went up to Rebecca with seeming kindness, and "conjured her to spare her father still greater grief, and her own and her child's public infamy, by acknowledging herself its mother, and naming the man who had undone her."

Emboldened by this insult from her own sex, Rebecca now began to declare the simple truth. But no sooner had she said, that "the child was presented to her care, by a young man who had found it," than her sisters burst into laughter, and her father into redoubled rage.

Once more the women offered their advice, "to confess and be forgiven."

Once more the father raved.

Beguiled by solicitations, and terrified by threats, like women formerly accused of witchcraft, and other wretches put to the torture, she thought her present sufferings worse than any that could possibly succeed; and felt inclined to confess a falsehood, at which her virtue shrunk, to obtain a momentary respite from reproach; she felt inclined to take the mother's share of the infant, but was at a loss to whom to give the father's. She thought that Henry had entailed on himself the best right to the charge; but she loved him, and could not bear the thought of accusing him falsely.

While, with agitation in the extreme, she thus deliberated, the proposition again was put—

"Whether she would trust to the mercy of her father by confessing, or draw down his immediate vengeance by denying her guilt?"

She made choice of the former, and, with tears and sobs, "owned herself the mother of the boy."

But still—"Who is the father?"

Again she shrunk from the question, and fervently implored "to be spared on that point."



Her petition was rejected with vehemence; and the Curate's rage increased till she acknowledged—

“Henry was the father.”

“I thought so!” exclaimed all her sisters at the same time.”

“Villain!” cried the Curate. “The Dean shall know, before this hour is expired, the baseness of the nephew whom he supports upon charity. He shall know the misery, the grief, the shame he has brought on me, and how unworthy he is of his protection.”

“Oh, have mercy on him!” cried Rebecca, as she still knelt to her father. “Do not ruin him with his uncle, for he is the best of human beings.”

“Ay, ay; we always saw how much she loved him,” cried her sisters.

“Wicked, unfortunate girl!” said the clergyman, his rage now subsiding, and tears supplying its place, “you have brought a scandal upon us all. Your sisters' reputation will be stamped with the colour of yours; my good name will suffer—but that is trivial; your soul is lost to virtue, to religion, to shame——”

“No, *indeed!*” cried Rebecca: “if you will but believe me.”

“Do not I believe you? Have not you confessed?”

“You will not pretend to unsay what you have said,” cried her eldest sister: “that would be making things worse.”

“Go, go out of my sight!” said her father. “Take your child with you to your chamber, and never let me see either of you again. I do not turn you out of my doors to-day, because I gave you my word I would not, if you revealed your shame; but by to-morrow I will provide some place for your reception, where neither I nor any of your relations shall ever see or hear of you again.”



Rebecca made an effort to cling around her father, and once more to declare her innocence; but her sisters interposed, and she was taken, with her reputed son, to the chamber where the Curate had sentenced her to remain, till she quitted his house for ever.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE Curate, in the disorder of his mind, scarcely felt the ground he trod as he hastened to the Dean's house to complain of his wrongs. His name procured him immediate admittance into the library; and the moment the Dean appeared the Curate burst into tears. The cause being required of such "very singular marks of grief," Mr. Rymer described himself "as having been, a few moments ago, the happiest of parents; but that his peace and that of his whole family had been destroyed by Mr. Henry Norwynne, the Dean's nephew."

He now entered into a minute recital of Henry's frequent visits there, and of all which had occurred in his house that morning—from the suspicion that a child was concealed under his roof, to the confession made by his youngest daughter of her fall from virtue, and of her betrayer's name.

The Dean was astonished, shocked, and roused to anger. He vented reproaches and menaces on his nephew; and, "blessing himself in a virtuous son, whose wisdom and counsel were his only solace in every care," sent for William to communicate with him on this unhappy subject.

William came, all obedience, and heard, with marks of amazement and indignation, the account of such black villany! In perfect sympathy with Mr. Rymer and his father, he allowed "no punishment could be too great for



the seducer of innocence, the selfish invader of a whole family's repose."

Nor did William here speak what he did not think—he merely forgot his own conduct; or, if he did recall it to his mind, it was with some fair interpretation in his own behalf, such as self-love ever supplies to those who wish to cheat intruding conscience.

Young Henry being sent for, to appear before this triumvirate, he came with a light step and a cheerful face. But, on the charge against him being exhibited, his countenance changed—yet only to the expression of surprise! He boldly asserted his innocence, plainly told the real fact, and with a deportment so perfectly unembarrassed that nothing but the asseverations of the Curate "that his daughter had confessed the whole" could have rendered the story Henry told suspected; although some of the incidents he related were of no common kind. But Mr. Rymer's charge was an objection to his veracity too potent to be overcome; and the Dean exclaimed, in anger—

"We want not your avowal of your guilt—the mother's evidence is testimony sufficient."

"The virtuous Rebecca is not a mother," said Henry, with firmness.

William here, like Rebecca's sisters, took Henry aside, and warned him not to "add to his offence by denying what was proved against him."

But Henry's spirit was too manly, his affection too sincere, not to vindicate the chastity of her he loved, even at his own peril. He again and again protested "she was virtuous."

"Let her instantly be sent for," said the Dean, "and this madman confronted with her." Then adding that, as he wished everything might be conducted with secrecy, he would not employ his clerk on the unhappy occasion, he



desired William to draw up the form of an oath, which he would administer as soon as she arrived.

A man and horse were immediately despatched to bring Rebecca. William drew up an affidavit as his father had directed him—in *Rebecca's name solemnly protesting she was a mother, and Henry the father of her child*—and now the Dean, suppressing till she came the warmth of his displeasure, spoke thus calmly to Henry:—

“Even supposing that your improbable tale of having found this child, and all your declarations in respect to it, were true, still you would be greatly criminal. What plea can you make for not having immediately revealed the circumstance to me or some other proper person, that the real mother might have been detected and punished for her design of murder?”

“In that, perhaps, I was to blame,” returned Henry; “but whoever the mother was, I pitied her.”

“Compassion on such an occasion was ill-placed,” said the Dean.

“Was I wrong, Sir, to pity the child?”

“No.”

“Then how could I feel for *that*, and yet divest myself of all feeling for its mother?”

“Its mother!” exclaimed William, in anger; “she ought to have been immediately pursued, apprehended, and committed to prison.”

“It struck me, cousin William,” replied Henry, “that the father was more deserving of a prison. The poor woman had abandoned only *one*—the man, in all likelihood, had forsaken *two* pitiable creatures.”

William was pouring execrations “on the villain, if such there could be,” when Rebecca was announced.

Her eyes were half closed with weeping; deep confusion overspread her face; and her tottering limbs could hardly



support her to the awful chamber where the Dean, her father, and William sat in judgment, whilst her beloved Henry stood arraigned as a culprit, by her false evidence.

Upon her entrance, her father first addressed her, and said, in a stern, threatening, yet feeling tone—

“Unhappy girl, answer me before all present—Have you, or have you not, owned yourself a mother?”

She replied, stealing a fearful look at Henry, “I have.”

“And have you not,” asked the Dean, “owned that Henry Norwynne is the father of your child?”

She seemed as if she wished to expostulate.

The Curate raised his voice,—“Have you, or have you not?”

“I have,” she faintly replied.

“Then, here,” cried the Dean to William, “read that paper to her, and take the Bible.”

William read the paper, which, in her name, declared a momentous falsehood: he then held the book in form, while she looked like one distracted—wrung her hands, and was near sinking to the earth.

At the moment when the book was lifted up to her lips to kiss, Henry rushed to her—

“Stop!” he cried, “Rebecca, do not wound your future peace. I plainly see under what prejudices you have been accused, under what fears you have fallen. But do not be terrified into the commission of a crime which hereafter will distract your delicate conscience. My requesting you of your father for my wife, will satisfy his scruples, prevent your oath—and here I make the demand.”

“He at length confesses! Surprising audacity! Complicated villany!” exclaimed the Dean; then added, “Henry Norwynne, your first guilt is so enormous—your second, in steadfastly denying it, so base—this last conduct so audacious—that, from the present hour, you must never



dare to call me relation, or to consider my house as your home."

William, in unison with his father, exclaimed—

"Indeed, Henry, your actions merit this punishment."

Henry answered with firmness—

"Inflict what punishment you please."

"With the Dean's permission, then," said the curate, "you must marry my daughter."

Henry started—

"Do you pronounce that as a punishment? It would be the greatest blessing Providence could bestow. But, how are we to live! My uncle is too much offended ever to be my friend again; and, in this country, persons of a certain class are so educated, they cannot exist without the assistance, or, what is called the patronage, of others: when that is withheld, they steal or starve. Heaven protect Rebecca from such misfortune! Sir" (to the Curate), "do you but consent to support her only a year or two longer, and in that time I will learn some occupation that shall raise me to the position of maintaining both her and myself without one obligation, or one inconvenience, to a single being."

Rebecca exclaimed—

"Oh, you have saved me from such a weight of sin, that my future life would be too happy, passed as your slave."

"No, my dear Rebecca, return to your father's house, return to slavery but for a few years more, and the rest of your life I will make free."

"And can you forgive me?"

"I can love you; and in that is comprised everything that is kind."

The Curate, who, bating a few passions and a few prejudices, was a man of some worth and feeling, felt, in the midst of her distress, though the result of supposed crimes,



that he loved this neglected daughter better than he had before conceived; and he now agreed "to take her home for a time, provided she were relieved from the child, and the matter so hushed up, that it might draw no imputation upon the characters of his other daughters."

The Dean did not degrade his consequence by consultations of this nature; but, having penetrated (as he imagined) into the very bottom of this intricate story, and issued his mandate against Henry, as a mark that he took no further concern in the matter, he proudly walked out of the room, without uttering another word.

William as proudly and silently followed.

The Curate was inclined to adopt the manners of such great examples; but self-interest, some affection to Rebecca, and concern for the character of his family, made him wish to talk a little more with Henry; who now repeated what he had said respecting his marriage with Rebecca, and promised "to come the very next day, in secret, and deliver her from the care of the infant, and the suspicion that would attend her nursing it."

"But, above all," said the Curate, "procure your uncle's pardon; for, without that, without his protection, or the protection of some other rich man, to marry, to obey God's ordinance, *increase and multiply*, is to want food for yourself and your offspring."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

THOUGH this unfortunate occurrence in the Curate's family was, according to his own phrase, "to be hushed up," yet certain persons of his, of the Dean's, and of Lord Bendham's house, immediately heard and talked of it. Among these, Lady Bendham was most of all shocked and offended : she said she never could bear to hear Mr. Rymer either pray or preach again. He had not conducted himself with proper dignity, either as a clergyman or a father : he should have imitated the Dean's example in respect to Henry, and have turned his daughter out of doors."

Lord Bendham was less severe on the seduced, but had no mercy on the seducer—"A vicious youth, without one accomplishment to endear vice." For vice, Lord Bendham thought (with certain philosophers), might be most exquisitely pleasing, in a pleasing garb. "But this youth sinned without elegance, without one particle of wit, or an atom of good breeding."

Lady Clementina would not permit the subject to be mentioned a second time in her hearing—extreme delicacy in woman she knew was bewitching ; and the delicacy she displayed on this occasion went so far, that she "could not even intercede with the Dean to forgive his nephew, because the topic was too gross for her lips to name, even in the ear of her husband."

Miss Sedgeley, though on the very eve of her bridal-day with William, felt so tender a regard for Henry, that often



she thought "Rebecca happier in disgrace and poverty, blest with the love of him, than she was likely to be in the possession of friends and fortune with his cousin."

Had Henry been of a nature to suspect others of evil, or had he felt a confidence in his own worth, such a passion as this young woman's would soon have disclosed its existence to him; but he, regardless of any attractions of Miss Sedgeley, equally supposed he had none in her eyes; and thus, fortunately, for the peace of all parties, this prepossession ever remained a secret, except to herself.

So little did William conceive that his clownish cousin could rival him in the affections of a woman of fashion, that he even slightly solicited his father "that Henry might not be banished from the house at least till after the following day, when the great festival of his marriage was to be celebrated."

But the Dean refused, and reminded his son, "that he was bound, both by his moral and religious character, in the eyes of God, and still more in the eyes of men, to show lasting resentment of iniquity like his."

William acquiesced, and immediately delivered to his cousin the Dean's "wishes for his amendment," and a letter of recommendation procured from Lord Bendham, to introduce him on board a man-of-war; where, he was told, he might hope to meet with preferment, according to his merit, as a sailor and a gentleman.


Henry pressed William's hand on parting, wished him happy in his marriage, and supplicated, as the only favour he would implore, an interview with his uncle, to thank him for all his former kindness, and to see him for the last time.

William repeated this petition to his father, but with so little energy, that the Dean did not grant it. He felt himself, he said, compelled to resent that reprobate character



in which Henry had appeared ; and he feared, "lest the remembrance of his last parting from his brother might, on taking a formal leave of that brother's son, reduce him to some tokens of weakness, that would ill become his dignity and just displeasure.

He sent him his blessing, with money to convey him to the ship ; and Henry quitted his uncle's house in a flood of tears, to obtain first a new protectress for his little foundling, and then to seek his fortune.





## CHAPTER XXX.

THE wedding-day of Mr. William Norwynne and Miss Caroline Sedgeley arrived : and, on that day, the bells of every parish surrounding that in which they lived joined with their own in celebration of the blissful union. Flowers were strewed before the new-married pair, and favours and ale made many a heart more gladsome than that of either bridegroom or bride.

Upon this day of ringing and rejoicing, the bells were not muffled, nor was conversation on the subject withheld from the ear of Agnes. She heard like her neighbours ; and, sitting on the side of her bed in her little chamber, suffered, under the cottage roof, as much affliction as ever visited a palace.

Tyrants, who have imbrued their hands in the blood of myriads of their fellow-creatures, can call their murders "religion, justice, attention to the good of mankind." Poor Agnes knew no sophistry to calm *her* sense of guilt ; she felt herself a harlot and a murderer ; a slighted, a deserted wretch, bereft of all she loved in this world, all she could hope for in the next.

She complained bitterly of illness, nor could the entreaties of her father and mother prevail on her to share in the sports of this general holiday. As none of her humble visitors suspected the cause of her more than ordinary indisposition, they endeavoured to divert it with an account



of everything they had seen at church—"what the bride wore—how joyful the bridegroom looked"—and all the seeming signs of that complete happiness which they conceived was for certain tasted.

Agnes, who, before this event, had at moments suppressed the agonising sting of self-condemnation, in the faint prospect of her lover, one day restored, on this memorable occasion lost every glimpse of hope, and was weighed to the earth with an accumulation of despair.

Where is the degree in which the sinner stops? Unhappy Agnes! the first time you permitted indecorous familiarity from a man who made you no promise, who gave you no hope of becoming his wife, who professed nothing beyond those fervent, though slender, affections which attach the rake to the wanton; the first time you interpreted his kind looks and ardent prayers into tenderness and constancy; the first time you descended from the character of purity, you rushed imperceptibly on the blackest crimes. The more sincerely you loved, the more you plunged in danger: from one ungoverned passion proceeded a second and a third. In the fervency of affection you yielded up your virtue! In the excess of fear, you stained your conscience with the intended murder of your child! and now, in the violence of grief you meditate—what?—to put an end to your existence by your own hand!

After casting her thoughts around, anxious to find some little bud of comfort on which to fix her longing eye, she beheld, in the total loss of William, nothing but a wide waste, an extensive plain of anguish. "How am I to be sustained through this dreary journey of life?" she exclaimed. Upon this question she felt, more poignantly than ever, her loss of innocence: innocence would have been her support; but, in place of this best prop to the



afflicted, guilt flashed on her memory every time she flew for aid to reflection.

At length, from horrible rumination, a momentary alleviation came:—"But one more step in wickedness," she triumphantly said, "and all my shame, all my sufferings are over." She congratulated herself upon the lucky thought; when, but an instant after, the tears trickled down her face for the sorrow her death, her sinful death, would bring to her poor and beloved parents. She then thought upon the probability of a sigh it might draw from William: and the pride, the pleasure of that little tribute, counterpoised every struggle on the side of life.

As she saw the sun decline, "When you rise again," she thought, "when you peep bright to-morrow morning into this little room to call me up, I shall not be here to open my eyes upon a hateful day—I shall no more regret that you have waked me! I shall be sound asleep, never to wake again in this wretched world—not even the voice of William would then arouse me."

While she found herself resolved, and evening just come on, she hurried out of the house, and hastened to the fatal wood; the scene of her dishonour—the scene of intended murder—and now the meditated scene of suicide.

As she walked along between the close-set trees, she saw, at a little distance, the spot where William first made love to her; and where, at every appointment, he used to wait her coming. She darted her eye away from this place with horror; but, after a few moments of emotion, she walked slowly up to it—shed tears, and pressed with her trembling lips the tree, against which he was accustomed to lean while he talked with her. She felt an inclination to make this the spot to die in; but her preconcerted plan of the less frightful death, of leaping into a pool on the other side of the wood, induced her to go onwards.



Presently, she came near the place where *her* child, and *William's*, was exposed to perish. Here she started with a sense of the most atrocious guilt; and her whole frame shook with the dread of an approaching, an omnipotent Judge, to sentence her for murder.

She halted, appalled, aghast! undetermined whether to exist longer beneath the pressure of a criminal conscience or die that very hour, and meet her final condemnation.

She proceeded a few steps farther, and beheld the very ivy-bush close to which her infant lay, when she left him exposed: and now, from this minute recollection, all the mother rising in her soul, she saw, as it were, her babe again in its deserted state; and, bursting into tears of bitterest contrition and compassion, she cried—

“As I was merciless to *thee*, my child, thy father has been pitiless to *me*! As I abandoned *thee* to die with cold and hunger, he has forsaken, and has driven *me* to die by self-slaughter.”

She now fixed her eager eyes on the distant pond, and walked more nimbly than before, to rid herself of her agonising sensations.

Just as she had nearly reached the wished-for brink. she heard a footstep, and saw, by the glimmering of a clouded moon, a man approaching. She turned out of her path, for fear her intentions should be guessed at, and opposed; but still, as she walked another way, her eye was wishfully bent towards the water that was to obliterate her love and her remorse—obliterate, for ever, William and his child.

It was now that Henry, who, to prevent scandal, had stolen at that still hour of the night to rid the curate of the incumbrance so irksome to him, and take the foundling to a woman whom he had hired for the charge; it was now that



Henry came up, with the child of Agnes in his arms carefully covered all over from the night's dew.

"Agnes, is it you?" cried Henry, at a little distance. "Where are you going thus late?"

"Home, Sir," said she, and rushed among the trees.

"Stop, Agnes," he cried: "I want to bid you farewell: to-morrow I am going to leave this part of the country for a long time. So God bless you, Agnes!" Saying this, he stretched out his arm to shake her by the hand.

Her poor heart trusting that his blessing, for want of more potent offerings, might perhaps, at this tremendous crisis, ascend to Heaven in her behalf, she stopped, returned, and put out her hand to take his.

"Softly!" said he; "don't wake my child. This spot has been a place of danger to him; for underneath this very ivy-bush it was that I found him."

"Found what?" cried Agnes, with a voice elevated to a tremendous scream.

"I will not tell you the story," replied Henry; "for no one I have ever yet told of it would believe me."

"I will believe you,—I will believe you," she repeated, with tones yet more impressive.

"Why, then," said Henry, "only five weeks ago——"

"Ah!" shrieked Agnes.

"What do you mean?" said Henry.

"Go on," she articulated, in the same voice.

"Why, then, as I was passing this very place, I wish I may never speak truth again if I did not find"—(here he pulled aside the warm rug in which the infant was wrapt—"this beautiful child."

"With a cord?"

"A cord was round its neck."

"'Tis mine—the child is mine—'tis mine—my child—I am the mother and the murderer—I fixed the cord, while the



ground shook under me—while flashes of fire darted before my eyes—while my heart was bursting with despair and horror! But I stopped short—I did not draw the noose—I had a moment of strength, and I ran away. I left him living—he is living now—escaped from my hands—and I am no longer ashamed, but overcome with joy that he is mine! I bless you, my dear, my dear, for saving his life—for giving him to me again—for preserving *my* life as well as my child's."

Here she took her infant, pressed it to her lips and to her bosom; then bent to the ground, clasped Henry's knees, and wept upon his feet.

He could not for a moment doubt the truth of what she said. Her powerful, yet broken accents, her convulsive embraces of the child, even more than her declaration, convinced him she was its mother.

"Good Heaven!" cried Henry; "and this is my cousin William's child!"

"But your cousin does not know it," said she. "I never told him—he was not kind enough to embolden me; therefore do not blame *him* for *my* sin. He did not know of my wicked designs—he did not encourage me——"

"But he forsook you, Agnes."

"He never said he *would* not. He always told me he could not marry me."

"Did he tell you so at his first private meeting?"

"No."

"Nor at the second?"

"No; nor yet at the third."

"When was it he told you so?"

"I forget the exact time; but I remember it was on that very evening when I confessed to him——"

"What?"

"That he had won my heart."



"Why did you confess it?"

"Because he asked me, and said it would make him happy if I would say so."

"Cruel! Dishonourable!"

"Nay, do not blame him. He cannot help *not* loving me, no more than I can help *loving* him."

Henry rubbed his eyes.

"Bless me, you weep! I always heard that you were brought up in a savage country; but I suppose it is a mis-take. It was your cousin William."

"Will you not apply to him for the support of your child?" asked Henry.

"If I thought he would not be angry."

"Angry! I will write to him on the subject, if you will give me leave."

"But do not say it is by my desire. Do not say I wish to trouble him. I would sooner beg than be a trouble to him."

"Why are you so delicate?"

"It is for my own sake—I wish him not to hate me."

"Then thus you may secure his respect. I will write to him, and let him know all the circumstances of your case. I will plead for his compassion on his child, but assure him that no conduct of his will ever induce you to declare (except only to me, who knew of your previous acquaintance) who is the father."

To this she consented; but when Henry offered to take from her the infant, and carry him to the nurse he had engaged, to this she would not consent.

"Do you mean, then, to acknowledge him yours?" Henry asked.

"Nothing shall force me to part from him again. I will keep him, and let my neighbours judge of me as they please."

Here Henry caught at a hope he feared to name before.



"You will, then, have no objection," said he, "to clear an unhappy girl to a few friends, with whom her character has suffered by becoming, at my request, his nurse?"

"I will clear any one, so that I do not accuse the father."

"You give me leave, then, in your name, to tell the whole story to some particular friends, my cousin William's part in it alone excepted?"

"I do."

Henry now exclaimed, "God bless you!" with greater fervour than when he spoke it before; and he now hoped the night was nearly gone, that the time might be so much the shorter before Rebecca should be reinstated in the esteem of her father, and of all those who had misjudged her.

"God bless *you!*" said Agnes, still more fervently, as she walked with unguided steps towards her home; for her eyes never wandered from the precious object which caused her unexpected return.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

HENRY rose early in the morning, and flew to the Curate's house, with more than even his usual thirst of justice, to clear injured innocence—to redeem from shame her whom he loved. With eager haste he told that he had found the mother, whose fall from virtue Rebecca, overcome by confusion and threats, had taken on herself.

Rebecca rejoiced; but her sisters shook their heads, and even the father seemed to doubt.

Confident in the truth of his story, Henry persisted so boldly in his affirmations that, if Mr. Rymer did not entirely believe what he said, he sincerely hoped that the Dean and other people might; therefore he began to imagine he could possibly cast from *his* family the present stigma, whether or no it belonged to any other.

No sooner was Henry gone than Mr. Rymer waited on the Dean to report what he had heard; and he frankly attributed his daughter's false confession to the compulsive methods he had adopted in charging her with the offence. Upon this statement, Henry's love to her was also a solution of his seemingly inconsistent conduct on that singular occasion.

The Dean immediately said, "I will put the matter beyond all doubt; for I will this moment send for the present reputed mother; and, if she acknowledges the child, I will instantly commit her to prison for the attempt of putting it to death."



The Curate applauded the Dean's sagacity. A warrant was issued, and Agnes brought prisoner before the grandfather of her child.

She appeared astonished at the peril in which she found herself. Confused, also, with a thousand inexpressible sensations which the Dean's presence inspired, she seemed to prevaricate in all she uttered.

Accused of this prevarication, she was still more disconcerted; said, and unsaid; confessed herself the mother of the infant; but declared she did not know, then owned she *did* know, the name of the man who had undone her, but would never utter it. At length she cast herself on her knees before the father of her betrayer, and supplicated "he would not punish her with severity, as she most penitently confessed her fault, so far as it related to herself."

While Mr. and Mrs. Norwynne, just entered on the honeymoon, were sitting side by side, enjoying, with peace and with honour, conjugal society, poor Agnes, threatened, reviled, and sinking to the dust, was hearing from the mouth of William's father, the enormity of those crimes to which his son had been accessory. She saw the mittimus written that was to convey her into a prison—saw herself delivered once more into the hands of constables, before her resolution left her of concealing the name of William in her story. She now, overcome with affright, and thinking she should expose him still more in a public court, if, hereafter on her trial, she should be obliged to name him—she now humbly asked the Dean to hear a few words she had to say in private; where she promised she would speak nothing but the truth.

"This was impossible," he said. "No private confessions before a magistrate. All must be done openly."

She urged again and again the same request. It was denied more peremptorily than at first. On which she said—



"Then, Sir, forgive me, since you force me to it, if I speak before Mr. Rymer and these men, what I would for ever have kept a secret if I could. One of your family is my child's father."

"Any of my servants?" cried the Dean.

"No."

"My nephew?"

"No: one who is nearer still."

"Come this way," said the Dean; "I will speak to you in private."

It was not that the Dean, as a magistrate, distributed partial decrees of pretended justice—he was rigidly faithful to his trust. He would not inflict punishment on the innocent, nor let the guilty escape; but, in all particulars of refined or coarse treatment, he would alleviate or aggravate according to the rank of the offender. He could not feel that a secret was of equal importance to a poor as to a rich person; and while Agnes gave no intimation but that her delicacy arose from fears for herself, she did not so forcibly impress him with an opinion that it was a case which had weighty cause for a private conference, as when she boldly said, "A part of *his* family, very near to him, was concerned in her tale."

The final result of their conversation, in an adjoining room, was a charge from the Dean, in the words of Mr. Rymer, "to hush the affair up;" and his promise that the infant should be immediately taken from her, and that "she should have no more trouble with it."

"I have no trouble with it," replied Agnes; "my child is now all my comfort; and I cannot part from it."

"Why, you inconsistent woman, did you not attempt to murder it?"

"That was before I had nursed it."

"'Tis necessary you should give it up. It must be sent



some miles away; and then the whole circumstances will be soon forgotten."

"*I shall never forget it.*"

"No matter; you must give up the child. Do not some of our first women of quality part with their children?"

"Women of quality have other things to love: I have nothing else."

"And would you occasion my son and his new-made bride, the shame and the uneasiness——"

Here Agnes burst into a flood of tears; and being angrily asked by the Dean, "why she blubbered so?"

"*I have had shame and uneasiness,*" she replied, wringing her hands.

"And you deserve them. They are the sure attendants of crimes such as yours. If you allured and entrapped a young man like my son——"

"I am the youngest by five years," said Agnes.

"Well, well, repent," returned the Dean; "repent, and resign your child. Repent, and you may yet marry an honest man, who knows nothing of the matter."

"And repent too?" asked Agnes.

Not the insufferable ignorance of young Henry, when he first came to England, was more vexatious or provoking to the Dean than the rustic simplicity of poor Agnes's uncultured replies. He, at last, in an offended and determined manner, told her, "That, if she would resign the child, and keep the father's name a secret, not only the child should be taken care of, but she, herself might, perhaps, receive some favours; but if she persisted in her imprudent folly, she must expect no consideration on her own account; nor should she be allowed for the maintenance of the boy, a sixpence beyond the stated sum for a poor man's unlawful offspring." Agnes, resolving not to be separated from her infant, bowed resignation to this last decree; and, terrified



at the loud words and angry looks of the Dean, after being regularly discharged, stole to her home; where the smiles of her infant, and the caresses she lavished on it, repaid her for the sorrows she had just suffered for its sake.

Let it here be observed, that the Dean, on suffering Agnes to depart, without putting in force the law against her, as he had threatened, did nothing, as it were, *behind the curtain*. He openly and candidly owned, on his return to Mr. Rymer, his clerk, and the two constables who were attending, "that an affair of some little gallantry, in which, he was extremely sorry to say, his son was rather too nearly involved, required, in consideration of his recent marriage, and an excellent young woman's (his bride's) happiness, that what had occurred should not be publicly talked of; therefore, he had thought proper only to reprimand the hussy, and send her about her business."

The Curate assured the Dean, "that upon this, and upon all other occasions, which should, would, or *could* occur, he owed to his judgment, as his superior, implicit obedience."

The clerk and the two constables most properly said, "His honour was a gentleman, and, of course, must know better how to act than they."



## CHAPTER XXXII.

THE pleasure of a mother, which Agnes experienced, did not make her insensible to the sorrow of a daughter.

Her parents had received the stranger child, along with a fabricated tale she told "of its appertaining to another," without the smallest suspicion; but, by the secret diligence of the Curate, and the nimble tongues of his elder daughters, the report of all that had passed on the subject of this unfortunate infant soon circulated through the village; and Agnes, in a few weeks, had seen her parents pine away in grief and shame at her loss of virtue.

She perceived her neighbours avoid, or openly sneer at *her*; but that was little; she saw them slight her aged father and mother upon her account: and she now took the resolution rather to perish for want in another part of the country, than live where she was known, and so entail an infamy upon the few who loved her. She slightly hoped, too, that by disappearing from the town and neighbourhood, some little reward might be allowed her, for her banishment, by the Dean's family. In that she was deceived. No sooner was she gone, indeed, than her guilt was forgotten; but with her guilt her wants. ~~The~~ The Dean and his family rejoiced at her and her child's departure: but, as the mode she had chosen chanced to be no specified condition in the terms proposed to her, they did not think they were bound to pay her for it; and while she was too fearful and bashful to solicit the Dean, and too proud (forlorn as she



was) to supplicate his son, they both concluded she "wanted for nothing;" for to be poor, and too delicate to complain, they deemed incompatible.

To heighten the sense of her degraded, friendless situation, she knew that Henry had not been unmindful of his promise to her, but that he had applied to his cousin in her and his child's behalf; for he had acquainted her that William's answer was—"All obligations on *his* part were now undertaken by his father; for that Agnes, having chosen (in a fit of malignity upon his marriage) to apprise the Dean of their former intercourse, such conduct had for ever cancelled all attention due from him to her, or to her child, beyond what its bare maintenance exacted."

In vain had Henry explained to him, by a second application, the predicament in which poor Agnes was involved, before she consented to reveal her secret to his father: William was happy in an excuse to rid himself of a burden; and he seemed to believe, what he wished to be true, that she had forfeited all claim to his further notice.

Henry informed her of this unkind reception of his efforts in her favour, in as gentle terms as possible, for she excited his deepest compassion. Perhaps our *own* misfortunes are the cause of our pity for others, even more than *their* ills; and Henry's present sorrows had softened his heart to peculiar sympathy in woe. He had unhappily found, that the ardour which had hurried him to vindicate the reputation of Rebecca was likely to deprive him of the blessing of her ever becoming his wife; for the Dean, chagrined that his son was at length proved an offender instead of his nephew, submitted to the temptation of punishing the latter, while he forgave the former. He sent for Henry, and having coldly congratulated him on his and Rebecca's innocence, represented to him the



impropriety of marrying the daughter of a poor curate, and laid his commands on him "never to harbour such an intention more." Henry found this restriction so severe, that he would not promise obedience ; but on his next attempt to visit Rebecca, he met a positive repulse from her father, who signified to him, "that the Dean had forbidden him to permit their farther acquaintance ;" and the curate declared, "that, for his own part, he had no will, judgment, or faculties, but that he submitted in all things to the superior clergy."

At the very time young Henry had received the proposal from Mr. Rymer, of his immediate union with his daughter, and the Dean had made no objection, Henry waived the happiness for the time present, and had given a reason why he wished it postponed. The reason he then gave had its weight ; but he had another concealed, of yet more import. Much as he loved, and looked forward with rapture to that time when every morning, every evening, and all the day, he should have the delight of Rebecca's society, still there was one other wish nearer his heart than this one desire, which, for years, had been foremost in his thoughts, and which not even love could eradicate:—he longed, he pined to know what fate had befallen his father. Provided he were living, he could conceive no joy so great as that of seeing him : if he were dead, he was anxious to pay the tribute of filial piety he owed, by satisfying his affectionate curiosity in every circumstance of the sad event.

While a boy, he had frequently expressed these sentiments to both his uncle and his cousin ; sometimes they apprised him of the total improbability of accomplishing his wishes ; at other times, when they saw the disappointment weigh heavy on his mind, they bade him "wait till he was a man, before he could hope to put his designs in execution."



He did wait. But on the very day he arrived at the age of twenty-one, he made a vow, "that to gain intelligence of his father should be the first important act of his free will."

Previously to this time, he had made all the inquiries possible, whether any new adventure to that part of Africa in which he was bred was likely to be undertaken. Of this there appeared to be no prospect, till the intended expedition to Sierra Leone was announced, and which favoured his hope of being able to procure a passage among those adventurers, so near to the island on which his father was (or had been) prisoner, as to obtain an opportunity of visiting it by stealth.

Fearing contention, or the being dissuaded from his plans if he communicated them, he not only formed them in private, but he kept them secret ; and his imagination filled with the kindness, the tenderness, the excess of fondness he had experienced from his father, beyond any other person in the world, he had thought with delight on the separation from all his other kindred, to pay his duty to him, or to his revered memory. Of late, indeed, there had been a person introduced to his acquaintance, from whom it was bitter to part ; but his designs had been planned and firmly fixed before he knew Rebecca ; nor could he have tasted contentment even with her, at the expense of his piety to his father.

In the last interview he had with the Dean, Henry, perceiving that his disposition towards him was not less harsh than when, a few days before, he had ordered him on board a vessel, found this the proper time to declare his intentions of accompanying the fleet to Sierra Leone. His uncle expressed surprise : but immediately gave him a sum of money, in addition to that he had sent him before, and as much as he thought might defray his expenses ; and



as he gave it, by his willingness, his look, and his accent, he seemed to say, "I foresee this is the last you will ever require."

Young William, though a very dutiful son, was amazed when he heard of Henry's project, as "the serious and settled resolution of a man."

Lady Clementina, Lord and Lady Bendham, and twenty others, "wished him a successful voyage," and thought no more about him.

It was for Rebecca alone to feel the loss of Henry—it was for a mind like hers alone to know his worth ; nor did this last proof of it, the quitting her for one who claimed by every tie a preference, lessen him in her esteem. When by a message from him, she became acquainted with his design, much as it interfered with her happiness, she valued him the more for this observance of his duty ; the more regretted his loss, and the more anxiously prayed for his return—a return which he, in the following letter, written just before his departure, taught her to hope for with augmented impatience :—

"MY DEAR REBECCA,—I do not tell you I am sorry to part from you—you know I am, and you know all I have suffered since your father denied me permission to see you.

"But, perhaps, you do not know the hopes I enjoy, and which bestow on me a degree of peace ; and those I am eager to tell you.

"I hope, Rebecca, to see you again : I hope to return to England, and overcome every obstacle to our marriage ; and then, in whatever station we are placed, I shall consider myself as happy as it is possible to be in this world. I feel a conviction that you would be happy also.

"Some persons, I know, estimate happiness by fine houses, gardens, and parks ; others by pictures, horses,



money, and various things wholly remote from their own species : but when I wish to ascertain the real felicity of any rational man, I always inquire *whom he has to love*. If I find he has nobody, or does not love those he has, even in the midst of all his profusion of finery, and grandeur, I pronounce him a being in deep adversity. In loving you, I am happier than my cousin William, even though I am obliged to leave you for a time.

“Do not be afraid you should grow old before I return—age can never alter you in my regard. It is your gentle nature, your unaffected manners, your easy cheerfulness, your clear understanding, the sincerity of all your words and actions, which have gained my heart ; and while you preserve charms like these, you will be dearer to me with white hairs and a wrinkled face, than any of your sex, who, not possessing all these qualities, enjoy the form and features of perfect beauty.

“You will esteem me, too, I trust, though I should return, on crutches, with my poor father, whom I may be obliged to maintain by daily labour.

“I shall employ all my time, during my absence, in the study of some art which may enable me to support you both, provided Heaven will bestow two such blessings on me. In the cheering thought that it will be so, and in that only, I have the courage, my dear,—dear Rebecca, to say to you,

“Farewell !

“H. NORWYNNE.”



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

BEFORE Henry could receive a reply to his letter, the fleet in which he sailed put to sea.

By his absence not only was Rebecca deprived of the friend she loved, but poor Agnes lost a kind and compassionate adviser. The loss of her parents, too, she had to mourn ; for they both sickened, and both died, in a short time after. And now wholly friendless in her little exile, where she could only hope for toleration, not being known, she was contending with suspicion, rebuffs, disappointments, and various other ills, which might have made the most rigorous of her Anfield persecutors feel compassion for her, could they have witnessed the throbs of her heart, and all the deep wounds there imprinted.

Still, there are few persons whom Providence afflicts beyond the limits of *all* consolation—few cast so low as not to feel pride on *certain* occasions ; and Agnes felt a comfort and a dignity in the thought that she had both a mind and a body capable of sustaining every hardship which her destiny might inflict, rather than submit to the disgrace of soliciting William's charity a second time.

This determination was put to a variety of trials. In vain she offered herself to the strangers of the village, in which she was accidentally cast, as a servant ; her child, her dejected looks, her broken sentences, a wildness in her eye, a kind of bold despair which at times overspread her features,



her imperfect story who and what she was, prejudiced all those to whom she applied; and after thus travelling to several small towns and hamlets, the only employer she could obtain was a farmer, and the only employment, to tend and feed his cattle while his men were in the harvest tilling the ground, or at some other labour which required at the time peculiar expedition.

Though Agnes was born of peasants, yet, having been the only child of industrious parents, she had been nursed with a tenderness and delicacy ill-suited to her present occupation. But she endured it with patience; and the most laborious part would have seemed light, could she have dismissed the reflection—what it was that had reduced her to such a state.

Soon her tender hands became hard and rough, her fair skin burnt and yellow; so that when, on a Sunday, she looked in the glass, she started back, as if it were some other face she saw instead of her own. But this loss of beauty gave her no regret—while William did not see her it was indifferent to her whether she were beautiful or hideous. On the features of her child only she now looked with joy. There she fancied she saw William at every glance; and, in the fond imagination, felt, at times, every happiness short of seeing him.

By herding with the brute creation, she and her child were allowed to live together; and this was a state she preferred to the society of human creatures, who would have separated her from what she loved so tenderly. Anxious to retain a service in which she possessed such a blessing, care and attention to her humble office caused her master to prolong her stay through all the winter; then, during the spring, she tended his yeaving sheep—in the summer, watched them as they grazed; and thus season after season passed, till her young son could afford her assistance in her daily work.



He now could charm her with his conversation as well as with his looks. A thousand times, in the transports of parental love, she has pressed him to her bosom, and thought, with an agony of horror, upon her criminal, her mad intent to destroy what was now so dear, so necessary to her existence.

Still the boy grew up more and more like his father. In one resemblance alone he failed: he loved Agnes with an affection totally distinct from the pitiful and childish gratification of his own self-love; he never would quit her side for all the tempting offers of toys or money; never would eat of rarities given to him till Agnes took a part; never crossed her will, however contradictory to his own; never saw her smile that he did not laugh; nor did she ever weep but he wept too.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

FROM the mean subject of oxen, sheep, and peasants, we return to personages—*i.e.*, persons of rank and fortune. The Bishop who was introduced in the foregoing pages, but who has occupied a very small space there, is now mentioned again, merely that the reader may know he is at present in the same state as his writings—dying; and that his friend, the Dean, is talked of as the most likely successor to his dignified office.

The Dean, most assuredly, had a strong friendship for the Bishop, and now, most assuredly, wished him to recover; and yet, when he reflected on the success of his pamphlet a few years past, and of many which he had written since on the very same subject, he could not but think “that he had more righteous pretensions to fill the vacant seat of his much-beloved and right reverend friend (should Providence ordain it to be vacated) than any other man;” and he knew that it would not take one moment from that friend’s remaining life should he exert himself, with all due management, to obtain the elevated station when *he* should be no more.

In presupposing the death of a friend, the Dean, like many other virtuous men, “always supposed him going to a better place.” With perfect resignation, therefore, he waited whatever change might happen to the Bishop; ready to receive him with open arms if he recovered, or equally ready, in case of his dissolution, to receive his dignities.



Lady Clementina displayed her sensibility and feeling for the sick prelate by the extravagance of hysteric fits ; except at those times when she talked seriously with her husband upon the injustice which she thought would be done to him, and to his many pamphlets and sermons, if he did not immediately rise to the episcopal honour.

"Surely, Dean," said she, "should you be disappointed upon this occasion, you will write no more books for the good of your country?"

"Yes, I will," he replied ; "but the next book I write for the good of my country shall be very different—nay, the very reverse of those I have already written."

"How, Dean! would you shew yourself changed?"

"No ; but I will shew that my country is changed."

"What! since you produced your last work, only six weeks ago?"

"Great changes may occur in six days," replied the Dean, with a threatening accent ; "and if I find things *have* taken a new and improper turn, I will be the first to expose it."

"But before you act in this manner, my dear, surely you will wait——"

"I will wait till the see is disposed of to another," said he.

He did wait : the Bishop died : the Dean was promoted to the see of \* \* \*, and wrote a folio on the prosperity of our happy country.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

WHILE the Bishop and his son were sailing before prosperous gales on the sea of life, young Henry was contending with adverse winds, and many other perils, on the watery ocean; yet still his distresses and dangers were less than those which Agnes had to encounter upon land. The sea threatens an untimely death; the shore menaces calamities from which death is a refuge.

The afflictions she had already experienced could just admit of aggravation: the addition occurred.

Had the good farmer who made her the companion of his flocks and herds lived till now, till now she might have been secure from the annoyance of human kind; but, thrown once more upon society, she was unfit to sustain the conflict of decorum against depravity. Her master, her patron, her preserver, was dead; and hardly as she had earned the pittance she received from him, she found that it surpassed her power to obtain the like again. Her doubtful character, her capacious mind, her unmethodical manners, were still badly suited to the nice precision of a country housewife; and as the prudent mistress of a family sneered at her pretensions, she, in her turn, scorned the narrow-minded mistress of a family.

In her inquiries how to gain her bread free from the cutting reproaches of discretion, she was informed that London was the only private corner where guilt could be secreted undisturbed; and the only public place where, in



open day, it might triumphantly stalk, attended by a train of audacious admirers.

There was a charm to the ear of Agnes in the name of London which thrilled through her soul. William lived in London; and she thought that, while she retired to some dark cellar with her offences, he probably would ride in state with his, and she at humble distance might sometimes catch a glimpse of him.

As difficult as to eradicate insanity from a mind once possessed, so difficult is it to erase from the lover's breast the deep impression of a *real* affection. Coercion may prevail for a short interval, still love will rage again. Not all the ignominy which Agnes experienced in the place where she now was, without a home; not the hunger which she at times suffered, and even at times saw her child endure; not every inducement for going to London, or motive for quitting her present desolate station, had the weight to affect her choice so much as—in London she should live nearer William;—in the present spot she could never hope to see him again; but there she might chance to pass him in the streets; she might pass his house every day unobserved; might inquire about him of his inferior neighbours, who would be unsuspecting of the cause of her curiosity. For these gratifications she could imbibe new fortitude; for these she could bear all hardships which London threatened; and for these she at length undertook a three weeks' journey to that perilous town on foot, cheering, as she walked along, her innocent and wearied companion.

William! in your luxurious dwelling, possessed of coffers filled with gold, relations, friends, clients, joyful around you, delicious viands and rich wines upon your sumptuous board,—voluptuousness displayed in every apartment of your habitation,—contemplate, for a moment, Agnes, your first love, with her son, your first and only child, walking through



frost and snow to London, with a foreboding fear on the mother,—that, when arrived, they both may perish for the want of a friend.

But no sooner did Agnes find herself within the smoke of the metropolis, than the old charm was renewed; and scarcely had she refreshed her child at the poor inn at which she stopped, than she inquired—how far it was to that part of the town where William, she knew, resided?

She received for answer, “About two miles.”

Upon this information, she thought that she would keep in reserve, till some new sorrow befell her, the consolation of passing his door (perchance of seeing him), which must ever be an alleviation of her grief. It was not long before she had occasion for more substantial comfort. She soon found she was not likely to obtain a service here, more than in the country. Some objected that she could not make caps and gowns; some that she could not preserve and pickle; some that she was too young; some that she was too pretty; and all declined accepting her, till at last a citizen’s wife, on condition of her receiving but half the wages usually given, took her as a servant of all work.

In romances, and in some plays, there are scenes of dark and unwholesome mines, wherein the labourer works, during the brightest day, by the aid of artificial light. There are in London, kitchens, — equally dismal, though not quite so much exposed to damp and noxious vapours. In one of these, underground, hidden from the cheerful light of the sun, poor Agnes was doomed to toil from morning till night, subjected to the command of a dissatisfied mistress, who, not estimating as she ought the misery incurred by serving her, constantly threatened her servants with dismissal; at which the unthinking wretches would tremble, merely from the sound of the words: for to have reflected—to have considered what their purport was—“to be released from a dungeon,



relieved from continual upbraidings, and vile drudgery," must have been a subject of rejoicing;—and yet, because these good tidings were delivered as a menace, custom had made the hearer fearful of the consequence. So, death being described to children as a disaster, even poverty and shame will start from it with affright; whereas, had it been pictured with its benign aspect, it would have been feared but by few, and many, many would welcome it with gladness.

All the care of Agnes to please, her fear of offending, her toilsome days, her patience, her submission, could not prevail on her she served to retain her one hour after, by chance, she had heard, "that she was the mother of a child; that she wished it should be kept a secret; and that she stole out now and then to visit him."

Agnes, with swimming eyes, and an almost breaking heart, left a place, where to have lived one hour would have plunged any fine lady in the deepest grief.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

AGNES was driven from service to service—her deficiency in the knowledge of a mere drudge, or her lost character, pursued her wherever she went:—at length, becoming wholly destitute, she gladly accepted a place where the latter misfortune was not of the least impediment.

In one of those habitations where continual misery is dressed in continual smiles; where extreme poverty is concealed by extreme of finery; where wine dispenses mirth only by dispensing forgetfulness; and where female beauty is so cheap, so complying, that while it inveigles, it disgusts, the man of pleasure. In one of those houses, to attend upon its wretched inhabitants, Agnes was hired. Her feelings of rectitude submitted to those of hunger; her principles of virtue (which the loss of virtue had not destroyed) received a shock when she engaged to be the abettor of vice, from which her delicacy, morality, and religion shrunk; but persons of honour and of reputation would not employ her: was she then to perish? That, perhaps, was easy to resolve; but she had a child to leave behind! a child, from whom to part for a day was a torment. Yet, before she submitted to a situation which filled her mind with a kind of loathing horror, often she paced up and down the street in which William lived, looked wistfully at his house, and sometimes, lost to all her finer feelings of independent pride, thought of sending a short petition to him; but, at the idea of a repulse, and of that frowning



brow which she knew William *could* dart on her petitions, she preferred death, or the most degrading life, to the trial.

It was long since that misfortune and dishonour had made her callous to the good or ill opinion of all the world, except *his*; and the fear of drawing upon her his increased contempt, was still, at the crisis of applying, so powerful, that she found she dared not hazard a reproof from him, even in the person of his father, whose rigour she had already more than once experienced, in the frequent harsh messages conveyed to her with the poor stipend for her boy.

Awed by the rigid and pious character of the new bishop, the growing reputation and rising honours of his son, she mistook the appearance of moral excellence for moral excellence itself, and felt her own unworthiness even to become the supplicant of those great men.

Day after day she watched those parts of the town through which William's chariot was accustomed to drive; but to see the *carriage* was all to which she aspired—a feeling, not to be described, forced her to cast her eyes upon the earth as it drew near to her; and when it had passed, she beat her breast and wept that she had not seen *him*.

Impressed with the superiority of others, and her own abject and disgustful state, she cried, "Let me herd with those who won't despise me—let me only see faces whereon I can look without confusion and terror—let me associate with wretches like myself, rather than force my shame before those who are so good, they can but scorn and hate me."

With a mind thus languishing for sympathy in disgrace, she entered as a servant the house just now described. There, disregarding the fatal proverb against "*evil com-*



*munications,"* she had not the firmness to be an exception to the general rule. That pliant disposition, which had yielded to the licentious love of William, stooped to still baser prostitution in company still more depraved.

At first she shuddered at those practices she saw, at those conversations she heard; and blest herself that poverty, not inclination, had caused her to be a witness of such profligacy, and had condemned her in this vile abode to be a servant, rather than in the lower rank of mistress. Use softened those horrors every day: at length, self-defence, the fear of ridicule, and the hope of favour, induced her to adopt that very conduct from which her heart revolted.

In her sorrowful countenance, and fading charms, there yet remained attraction for many visitors; and she now submitted to the mercenary profanations of love—more odious as her mind had been subdued by its most captivating, most endearing joys.

While incessant regret whispered to her "that she ought to have endured every calamity rather than this," she thus questioned her nice sense of wrong:—"Why, why respect myself, since no other respects me? Why set a value on my own feelings, when no one else does?"

Degraded in her own judgment, she doubted her own understanding, when it sometimes told her she had deserved better treatment—for she felt herself a fool in comparison with her learned seducer and the rest who despised her. "And why," she continued, "should I ungratefully persist to contemn women, who alone are so kind as to accept me for a companion? Why refuse conformity to their customs, since none of my sex besides will admit me to their society a partaker of virtuous habits?"

In speculation, these arguments appeared reasonable, and she pursued their dictates: but in the practice of the life in



which she plunged she proved the fallacy of the system; and at times tore her hair with frantic sorrow—that she had not continued in the mid-way of guilt, and so preserved some portion of self-approbation, to recompense her, in a small degree, for the total loss of the esteem of all the reputable world.

But she had gone too far to recede. Could she now have recalled her innocence, even that remnant she brought with her to London, experience would have taught her to have given up her child, lived apart from him, and once more with the brute creation, rather than to have mingled with her present society. Now, alas! the time for flying was past—all prudent choice was over—even all reflection was gone for ever—or only admitted on compulsion, when it imperiously forced its way amidst the scenes of tumultuous mirth, or licentious passion, of distracted riot, shameless effrontery, and wild intoxication—when it *would* force its way—even through the walls of a brothel.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

Is there a reader so little experienced in the human heart, so forgetful of his own, as not to feel the possibility of the following fact?

A series of uncommon calamities had been for many years the lot of the elder Henry—a succession of prosperous events had fallen to the share of his brother William. The one was the envy, while the other had the compassion, of all who thought about them. For the last twenty years, William had lived in affluence bordering upon splendour—his friends, his fame, his fortune daily increasing; while Henry, throughout that very period, had, by degrees, lost all he loved on earth, and was now existing apart from civilised society—and yet, during those twenty years, where William knew one happy moment, Henry tasted hundreds.

That the state of the mind, and not outward circumstances, is the nice point on which happiness depends, is but a trite remark; but that intellectual power should have the force to render a man discontented in extraordinary prosperity, such as that of the present Bishop, or contented in his brother's extreme of adversity, requires illustration.

The first great affliction to Henry was his brother's ingratitude; but reasoning on the frailty of man's nature, and the force of man's temptations, he found excuses for William, which made him support the treatment he had received with more tranquility than William's proud mind



supported his brother's marriage. Henry's indulgent disposition made him less angry with William, than William was with him.

The next affliction Henry suffered was the loss of his beloved wife. That was a grief which time and change of objects gradually alleviated; while William's wife was to him a permanent grief: her puerile mind, her talking vanity, her affected virtues, soured his domestic comfort; and, in time, he had suffered more painful moments from her society, than his brother had experienced, even from the death of her he loved.

In their children, indeed, William was the happier—his son was a pride and pleasure to him, while Henry never thought upon *his* without lamenting his loss with bitterest anguish. But if the elder brother had in one instance the advantage, still Henry had a resource to over-balance this article. Henry, as he lay imprisoned in his dungeon, and when, his punishment being remitted, he was again allowed to wander and seek his subsistence where he would,—in all his tedious walks and solitary resting-places, during all his lonely days and mournful nights, had *this resource* to console him:—

“I never did an injury to any one; never was harsh, severe, unkind, deceitful: I did not merely confine myself to do my neighbour no harm—I strove to do him service.”

This was the resource that cheered his sinking heart amidst gloomy deserts and a barbarous people; lulled him to peaceful slumber in the hut of a savage hunter, and in the hearing of the lion's roar; at times impressed him with a sense of happiness; and made him contemplate, with a longing hope, the recompense of a future world.

The Bishop, with all his comforts, had no comfort like this: he had *his* solitary reflections too; but they were of a tendency the reverse of these. “I used my brother ill,” was



a secret thought of most powerful influence; it kept him waking upon his safe and commodious bed; was sure to recur with every misfortune by which he was threatened, to make his fears still stronger; and came, with invidious stabs, upon every successful event, to take from him a part of his joy. In a word, it was *conscience* which made Henry's years pass happier than William's.

But though, comparatively with his brother, William was the less happy man, yet his self-reproach was not of such magnitude, for an offence of that atrocious nature, as to banish from his breast a certain degree of happiness, a sensibility to the smiles of fortune; nor was Henry's self-acquittal of such exquisite kind as to chase away the feeling of his desolate condition.

As he fished or hunted for his daily dinner, many a time in full view of his prey, a sudden burst of sorrow at his fate, a sudden longing for some dear associate, for some friend to share his thoughts, for some kind shoulder on which to lean his head, for some companion to partake his repast, would make him instantaneously desist from his pursuit, and cast him on the ground in a fit of anguish, till a shower of tears, and his *conscience*, came to his relief.

It was after an exile of more than twenty-three years—when, on one sultry morning, after pleasant dreams during the night, Henry had waked with more than usual perception of his misery—that, sitting upon the beach, his wishes and his looks all bent on the sea towards his native land, he thought he saw a sail swelling before an unexpected breeze.

“Sure I am dreaming still!” he cried. “This is the very vessel I saw last night in my sleep! Oh, what cruel mockery, that my eyes should so deceive me!”

Yet, though he doubted, he leaped upon his feet in transport: held up his hands, stretched at their length, in a kind



of ecstatic joy; and as the glorious sight approached, was near rushing into the sea to hail and meet it.

For awhile hope and fear kept him in a state bordering on distraction.

Now he saw the ship making for the shore, and tears flowed for the grateful prospect. Now it made for another point, and he vented shrieks and groans from the disappointment.

It was at those moments, while hope and fear thus possessed him, that the horrors of his abode appeared more than ever frightful. Inevitable afflictions must be borne; but that calamity which admits the expectation of relief, and then denies it, is insupportable.

After a few minutes passed in dreadful uncertainty, which enhanced the wished-for happiness, the ship evidently drew near the land,—a boat was launched from her—and while Henry, now upon his knees, wept, and prayed fervently for the event, a youth sprang from the barge on the strand, rushed towards him, and falling on his neck, then at his feet, exclaimed, “My father! oh, my father!”

William! Dean! Bishop! what are your honours, what your riches, what all your possessions, compared to the happiness, the transport bestowed by this one sentence on your poor brother Henry?



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE crosses at land, and the perilous events at sea, had made it now two years since young Henry first took the vow of a man, no longer dependent on the will of another, to seek his father. His fatigues, his dangers, were well recompensed. Instead of weeping over a silent grave, he had the inexpressible joy to receive a parent's blessing for his labours. Yet the elder Henry, though living, was so changed in person, that his son would scarcely have known him in any other than the favourite spot, which the younger (keeping in memory every incident of his former life) knew his father had always chosen for his morning contemplations; and where, previously to his coming to England, he had many a time kept him company. It was to that particular corner of the island that the captain of the ship had generously ordered they should steer, out of the general route, to gratify the filial tenderness he expressed. But scarcely had the interview between the father and the son taken place, than a band of natives, whom the appearance of the vessel had called from the woods and hills, came to attack the invaders. The elder Henry had no friend with whom he wished to shake hands at his departure: the old negro servant who had assisted in young Henry's escape was dead; and he experienced the excessive joy of bidding adieu to the place, without one regret for all he left behind.



On the night of that day, whose morning had been marked by peculiar sadness at the lowering prospect of many exiled years to come, he slept on board an English vessel, with Englishmen his companions, and his son, his beloved son—who was still more dear to him for that mind which had planned and executed his rescue—this son, his attentive servant, and most affectionate friend.

Though many a year passed, and many a rough encounter was destined to the lot of the two Henrys before they saw the shores of Europe, yet to them, to live or to die together was happiness enough : even young Henry for a time asked for no greater blessing ; but, the first glow of filial ardour over, he called to mind, “Rebecca lived in England ;” and every exertion which love, founded on the highest reverence and esteem, could dictate, he employed to expedite a voyage, the end of which would be crowned by the sight of her.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE contrast of the state of happiness between the two brothers was nearly resembled by that of the two cousins—the riches of young William did not render him happy; nor did the poverty of young Henry doom him to misery. His affectionate heart, as he had described in his letter to Rebecca, loved persons rather than things; and he would not have exchanged the society of his father, nor the prospect of her hand and heart, for all the wealth and splendour of which his cousin William was the master.

He was right. Young William, though he viewed with contempt Henry's inferior state, was far less happy than he. His marriage had been the very counterpart of his father's; and, having no child to create affection to his home, his study was the only relief from that domestic incumbrance called his wife; and though, by unremitting application there (joined to the influence of the potent relations of the woman he hated), he at length arrived at the summit of his ambitious desires, still they poorly repaid him for the sacrifice he had made in early life of every tender disposition.

Striding through a list of rapid advancements in the profession of the law, at the age of thirty-eight he found himself raised to a preferment such as rarely falls to the share of a man of his short experience—he found himself invested with a judge's robe: and gratified by the exalted



office, curbed more than ever that aversion which her want of charms or sympathy had produced against the partner of his honours.

While William had thus been daily rising in fortune's favour, poor Agnes had been daily sinking deeper and deeper under fortune's frowns; till at last she became a midnight wanderer through the streets of London, soliciting, or rudely demanding, money of the passing stranger. Sometimes, hunted by the watch, she affrighted fled from street to street, from portico to portico—and once, unknowing in her fear which way she hurried, she found her trembling knees had sunk, and her wearied head was reclined, against the stately pillars that guarded William's door.

At the sudden recollection where she was, a swell of passion composed of horror, of anger, of despair, and love, gave re-animated strength to her failing limbs; and, regardless of her pursuer's steps, she ran to the centre of the street, and, looking up to the windows of the mansion, cried, "Ah! there he sleeps in quiet, in peace, in ease—he does not even dream of me—he does not care how the cold pierces, or how the people persecute, me! He does not thank me for all the lavish love I have borne him and his child! His heart is so hard, he does not even recollect that it was he who brought me to ruin."

Had these miseries, common to the unhappy prostitute, been alone the punishment of Agnes—had her crimes and sufferings ended in distress like this—her story had not, perhaps, been selected for a public recital; for it had been no other than the customary history of thousands of her sex. But Agnes had a destiny yet more fatal. Unhappily, she was endowed with a mind so sensibly alive to every joy, and every sorrow, to every mark of kindness, every token of severity, so liable to excess in passion, that, once per-



verted, there was no degree of error from which it would revolt.

Taught by the conversation of the desolate poor, with whom she now associated, or by her own observation on the wordly reward of elevated villany, she began to suspect "that dishonesty was only held a sin to secure the property of the rich ; and that, to take from those who did not want, by the art of stealing, was less guilt than to take from those who did want, by the power of the law."

By false yet seducing opinions such as these, her reason estranged from every moral and religious tie, her necessities urgent, she reluctantly accepted the proposal to mix with a band of practised sharpers and robbers, and became an accomplice in negotiating bills forged on a country banker.

But though ingenious in arguments to excuse the deed before its commission, in the act she had ever the dread of some incontrovertible statement on the other side of the question. Intimidated by this apprehension, she was the veriest bungler in her vile profession—and on the alarm of being detected, while every one of her confederates escaped and absconded, she alone was seized, was arrested for issuing notes they had fabricated, and committed to the provincial gaol, about fifty miles from London, where the crime had been perpetrated, to take her trial for—life or death.



## CHAPTER XL.

THE day at length is come, on which Agnes shall have a sight of her beloved William ! She who has watched for hours near his door, to procure a glimpse of him going out, or returning home ; who has walked miles to see his chariot pass ; she now will behold him, and he will see her by command of the laws of their country. Those laws, which will deal with rigour towards her, are in this one instance still indulgent.

The time of the assizes, at the county-town in which she is imprisoned, is arrived—the prisoners are demanded at the shire hall—the gaol doors are opened—they go in sad procession ;—the trumpet sounds—it speaks the arrival of the judge—and that judge is William.

The day previous to her trial Agnes had read, in the printed calendar of the prisoners, his name as the learned justice before whom she was to appear. For a moment she forgot her perilous state in the excess of joy which the still unconquerable love she bore to him permitted her to taste even on the brink of the grave ! After-reflection made her check these worldly transports as unfit for the present solemn occasion. But, alas ! to her earth and William were so closely united, that, till she forsook the one, she could never cease to think, without the contending passions of hope, of fear, of joy, of love, of shame, and of despair, on the other.



Now fear took the place of her first immoderate joy. She feared that, although much changed in person since he had seen her, and her real name now added to many an *alias*—yet she feared that some well-known glance of the eye, turn of the action, or accent of speech, might recall her to his remembrance; and at that idea shame overcame all her other sensations—for still she retained pride, in respect to *his* opinion, to wish him not to know Agnes was that wretch she felt she was. Once a ray of hope beamed on her “that if he knew her, if he recognised her, he might possibly befriend her cause;” and life bestowed through William’s friendship seemed a precious object! But again, that rigorous honour she had often heard him boast, that firmness to his word, of which she had fatal experience, taught her to know he would not, for any improper compassion, any unmanly weakness, forfeit his oath of impartial justice.

In meditations such as these she passed the sleepless night.

When, in the morning, she was brought to the bar, and her guilty hand held up before the righteous judgment-seat of William, imagination could not form two figures or two situations, more incompatible with the existence of former familiarity than the judge and the culprit; and yet these very persons had passed together the most blissful moments that either ever tasted! Those hours of tender dalliance were now present to *her* mind. *His* thoughts were more nobly employed in his high office; nor could the haggard face, hollow eye, desponding countenance, and meagre person of the poor prisoner once call to his memory, though her name was uttered among a list of others which she had assumed, his former youthful, lovely Agnes.

She heard herself arraigned with trembling limbs and downcast looks; and many witnesses had appeared against her before she ventured to lift her eyes up to her awful judge.



She then gave one fearful glance, and discovered William, unpitied but beloved William, in every feature! It was a face she had been used to look on with delight, and a kind of absent smile of gladness now beamed on her poor wan visage.

When every witness on the part of the prosecutor had been examined, the judge addressed himself to her:—

“What defence have you to make?”

It was William spoke to Agnes! The sound was sweet; the voice was mild, was soft, compassionate, encouraging! It almost charmed her to a love of life!—not such a voice as when William last addressed her; when he left her undone and pregnant, vowing never to see or speak to her more.

She could have hung upon the present words for ever! She did not call to mind that this gentleness was the effect of practice, the art of his occupation; which, at times, is but a copy, by the unfeeling, from his benevolent brethren of the bench. In the present judge tenderness was not designed for the consolation of the culprit, but for the approbation of the auditors.

There were no spectators, Agnes, by your side when last he parted from you. If there had, the awful William had been awed to marks of pity.

Stunned with the enchantment of that well-known tongue directed to her, she stood like one just petrified—all vital power seemed suspended.

Again he put the question, and with these additional sentences, tenderly and emphatically delivered,—“Recollect yourself. Have you no witnesses? No proof in your behalf?”

A dead silence followed these questions.

He then mildly, but forcibly, added,—“What have you to say?”

Here a flood of tears burst from her eyes, which she fixed



earnestly upon him, as if pleading for mercy, while she faintly articulated—

“Nothing, my Lord.”

After a short pause he asked her, in the same forcible but benevolent tone—

“Have you no one to speak to your character?”

The prisoner answered—

“No.”

A second gush of tears followed this reply, for she called to mind by *whom* her character had first been blasted.

He summed up the evidence; and every time he was compelled to press hard upon the proofs against her, she shrunk, and seemed to stagger with the deadly blow; writhed under the weight of *his* minute justice more than at the prospect of a shameful death.

The jury consulted for a few minutes. The verdict was—

“Guilty.”

She heard it with composure.

But when William placed the fatal velvet on his head and rose to pronounce her sentence, she started with a kind of convulsive motion, retreated a step or two back, and, lifting up her hands, with a scream, exclaimed—

“Oh, not from *you*!”

The piercing shriek which accompanied these words prevented their being heard by part of the audience; and those who heard them thought little of their meaning, more than that they expressed her fear of dying.

Serene and dignified as if no such exclamation had been uttered, William delivered the fatal speech, ending with “Dead, dead, dead.”

She fainted as he closed the period, and was carried back to prison in a swoon; while he adjourned the court to go to dinner.



## CHAPTER XLI.

IF, unaffected by the scene he had witnessed, William sat down to dinner with an appetite, let not the reader conceive that the most distant suspicion had struck his mind of his ever having seen, much less familiarly known, the poor offender whom he had just condemned. Still, this forgetfulness did not proceed from the want of memory for Agnes. In every peevish or heavy hour passed with his wife, he was sure to think of her. Yet it was self-love, rather than love of *her*, that gave rise to these thoughts. He felt the lack of female sympathy and tenderness, to soften the fatigue of studious labour; to soothe a sullen, a morose disposition—he felt he wanted comfort for himself, but never once considered what were the wants of Agnes.

In the chagrin of a barren bed, he sometimes thought, too, even on the child that Agnes bore him; but whether it were male or female, whether a beggar in the streets or dead—various and important public occupations forbade him to waste time to inquire. Yet the poor, the widow, and the orphan, frequently shared William's ostentatious bounty. He was the president of many excellent charities, gave largely, and sometimes instituted benevolent societies for the unhappy; for he delighted to load the poor with obligations and the rich with praise.

There are persons, like him, who love to do every good but that which their immediate duty requires. There are servants who will serve every one more cheerfully than their



masters; there are men who will distribute money liberally to all except their creditors; and there are wives who will love all mankind better than their husbands. *Duty* is a familiar word which has little effect upon an ordinary mind; and, as ordinary minds make a vast majority, we have acts of generosity, valour, self-denial, and bounty, where smaller pains would constitute greater virtues. Had William followed the *common* dictates of charity—had he adopted private pity instead of public munificence—had he cast an eye at home before he sought abroad for objects of compassion, Agnes had been preserved from an ignominious death, and he had been preserved from—*Remorse*—the tortures of which he for the first time proved on reading a printed sheet of paper accidentally thrown in his way a few days after he had left the town in which he had condemned her to die.

“*March the 12th, 179—.*

“The last dying words, speech, and confession; birth, parentage, and education; life, character, and behaviour, of Agnes Primrose, who was executed this morning, between the hours of ten and twelve, pursuant to the sentence passed upon her by the Honourable Justice Norwynne.

“Agnes Primrose was born of honest parents, in the village of Anfield, in the county of ——” [William started at the name of the village and county]; “but being led astray by the arts and flattery of seducing man, she fell from the paths of virtue, and took to bad company, which instilled into her young heart all their evil ways, and at length brought her to this untimely end. So she hopes her death will be a warning to all young persons of her own sex, how they listen to the praises and courtship of young men, especially of those who are their betters; for they only court



to deceive. But the said Agnes freely forgives all persons who have done her injury, or given her sorrow, from the young man who first won her heart, to the jury who found her guilty, and the judge who condemned her to death.

“And she acknowledges the justice of her sentence, not only in respect of the crime for which she suffers, but in regard to many other heinous sins of which she has been guilty, more especially that of once attempting to commit a murder upon her own helpless child, for which guilt she now considers the vengeance of God has overtaken her, to which she is patiently resigned, and departs in peace and charity with all the world, praying the Lord to have mercy on her parting soul.”

*“Postscript to the Confession.”*

“So great was this unhappy woman’s terror of death, and the awful judgment that was to follow, that when sentence was pronounced upon her, she fell into a swoon, from that into convulsions, from which she never entirely recovered, but was delirious to the time of her execution, except that short interval in which she made her confession to the clergyman who attended her. She has left one child, a youth about sixteen, who has never forsaken his mother during all the time of her imprisonment, but waited on her with true filial duty: and no sooner was her fatal sentence passed, than he began to droop, and now lies dangerously ill near the prison from which she is released by death. During the loss of her senses, the said Agnes Primrose raved continually of this child; and, asking for pen, ink, and paper, wrote an incoherent petition to the judge, recommending the youth to his protection and mercy. But, notwithstanding this insanity, she behaved with composure and resignation when the fatal morning arrived in which she



was to be launched into eternity. She prayed devoutly during the last hour, and seemed to have her whole mind fixed on the world to which she was going. A crowd of spectators followed her to the fatal spot, most of whom returned weeping at the recollection of the fervency with which she prayed, and the impression which her dreadful state seemed to make upon her."

\* \* \* \* \*

No sooner had the name of "Anfield" struck William, than a thousand reflections and remembrances flashed on his mind to give him full conviction whom it was he had judged and sentenced. He recollected the sad remains of Agnes, such as he once had known her; and now he wondered how his thoughts could have been absent from an object so pitiable, so worthy of his attention, as not to give him even a suspicion who she was, either from her name, or from her person, during the whole trial.

But wonder, astonishment, horror, and every other sensation, was absorbed by—*Remorse*:—it wounded, it stabbed, it rent his hard heart, as it would do a tender one. It made havoc on his firm inflexible mind, as it would on a weak and pliant brain!—Spirit of Agnes! look down and behold all your wrongs revenged! William feels—*Remorse!*



## CHAPTER XLII.

A FEW momentary cessations from the pangs of a guilty conscience were given to William as soon as he had despatched a messenger to the gaol in which Agnes had been confined, to inquire after the son she had left behind, and to give orders that immediate care should be taken of him. He likewise charged the messenger to bring back the petition she had addressed to him during her supposed insanity; for he now experienced no trivial consolation in the thought, that he might possibly have it in his power to grant her a request.

The messenger returned with the written paper, which had been considered by the persons to whom she had entrusted it, as the distracted dictates of an insane mind; but proved to William, beyond a doubt, that she was perfectly in her senses.

“TO MY LORD JUSTICE NORWYNNE.

“MY LORD,

“I am Agnes Primrose, the daughter of John and Hannah Primrose, of Anfield. My father and mother lived by the hill at the side of the little brook where you used to fish, and so first saw me.

“Pray, my Lord, have mercy on my sorrows: pity me for the first time, and spare my life. I know I have done wrong—I know it is presumption in me to dare to apply to



you, such a wicked and mean wretch as I am ; but, my Lord, you once condescended to take notice of me—and though I have been very wicked since that time, yet, if you would be so merciful as to spare my life, I promise to amend it for the future. But, if you think it proper I should die, I will be resigned ; but, then, I hope, I beg, I supplicate, that you will grant my other petition. Pray, pray, my Lord, if you cannot pardon me, be merciful to the child I leave behind. What he will do when I am gone, I don't know—for I have been the only friend he has had ever since he was born. He was born, my Lord, about sixteen years ago, at Anfield one summer's morning, and carried by your cousin, Mr. Henry Norwynne, to Mr. Rymer's, the curate there—and I swore whose child he was, before the Dean, and I did not take a false oath. Indeed, indeed, my Lord, I did not.

“ I will say no more for fear this should not come safe to your hand, for the people treat me as if I were mad. So I will say no more, only this, that whether I live or die, I forgive everybody, and I hope everybody will forgive me, and I pray that God will take pity on my son if you refuse : but I hope you will not refuse.

“ AGNES PRIMROSE.”

William rejoiced as he laid down the petition, that she had asked a favour he could bestow ; and hoped by his protection of the son to redress, in some degree, the wrongs he had done the mother. He instantly sent for the messenger into his apartment, and impatiently asked, “ If he had seen the boy, and given proper directions for his care.”

“ I have given directions, Sir, for his funeral.”

“ How ! ” cried William.

“ He pined away ever since his mother was confined, and died two days after her execution.”

Robbed, by this news, of his only gleam of consolation—



in the consciousness of having done a mortal injury for which he never now by any means could atone, he saw all his honours, all his riches, all his proud, selfish triumphs fade before him ! They seemed like airy nothings, which in rapture he would exchange for the peace of a tranquil conscience !

He envied Agnes the death to which he first exposed, then condemned her ; he envied her even the life she struggled through from his neglect, and felt that his future days would be far less happy than her former existence. He calculated with precision.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

THE progressive rise of William, and fall of Agnes, had now occupied nearly the term of eighteen years. Added to these, another year elapsed before the younger Henry completed the errand on which his heart was fixed, and returned to England. Shipwreck, imprisonment, and other ills to which the poor and unfriended traveller is peculiarly exposed, detained the father and son in various remote regions until the present period; and, for the last fifteen years, denied them the means of all correspondence with their own country.

The elder Henry was now past sixty years of age, and the younger almost beyond the prime of life. Still length of time had not diminished, but rather had increased, their anxious longings for their native home.

The sorrows, disappointments, and fatigues which throughout these tedious years were endured by the two Henrys are of that dull monotonous kind of suffering, better omitted than described; mere repetitions of the exile's woe, that shall give place to the transporting joy of return from banishment! Yet, often as the younger had reckoned, with impatient wishes, the hours which were passed distant from her he loved, no sooner was his disastrous voyage at an end—no sooner had his feet trod upon the shore of Britain, than a thousand wounding fears made him almost doubt whether it were happiness or misery



he had obtained by his arrival. If Rebecca were living, he knew it must be happiness; for his heart dwelt with confidence on her faith—her unchanging sentiments. “But death might possibly have ravished from his hopes what no mortal power could have done.” And thus the lover creates a rival in every ill, rather than suffer his fears to remain inanimate.

The elder Henry had less to fear or to hope than his son; yet he both feared and hoped with a sensibility that gave him great anxiety. He hoped his brother would receive him with kindness, after his long absence, and once more take his son cordially to his favour. He longed impatiently to behold his brother; to see his nephew; nay, in the ardour of the renewed affection he just now felt, he thought even a distant view of Lady Clementina would be grateful to his sight! But still, well remembering the pomp, the state, the pride of William, he could not rely on *his* affection, so much he knew that it depended on external circumstances to excite or to extinguish his love. Not that he feared an absolute repulse from his brother; but he feared, what, to a delicate mind, is still worse, reserved manners, cold looks, absent sentences, and all that cruel retinue of forms of indifference, with which those who are beloved so often wound the bosom that adores them.

By inquiring of their countrymen (whom they met as they approached the end of their voyage) concerning their relation the Dean, the two Henrys learned that he was well, and had for some years past been exalted to the Bishopric of \* \* \*. This news gave them joy, while it increased their fear of not receiving an affectionate welcome.

The younger Henry, on his landing, wrote immediately to his uncle, acquainting him with his father's arrival in the most abject state of poverty; he addressed his letter to the Bishop's country residence, where he knew, as it was the



summer season, he would certainly be. He and his father then set off on foot, towards that residence—a palace!

The Bishop's palace was not situated above fifty miles from the port where they had landed; and at a small inn about three miles from the Bishop's, they proposed (as the letter to him intimated) to wait for his answer, before they intruded into his presence.

As they walked on their solitary journey, it was some small consolation that no creature knew them.

“To be poor and ragged, father,” the younger smilingly said, “is no disgrace, no shame, thank Heaven, where the object is not known.”

“True, my son,” replied Henry: “and perhaps I feel myself much happier now, unknowing and unknown to all but you, than I shall in the presence of my fortunate brother and his family; for there, confusion at my ill success through life may give me greater pain, than even my misfortunes have inflicted.”

After uttering this reflection which had preyed upon his mind, he sat down on the road-side to rest his agitated limbs, before he could proceed farther. His son reasoned with him—gave him courage; and now his hopes preponderated, till after two days' journey, on arriving at the inn where an answer from the Bishop was expected, no letter, no message had been left.

“He means to renounce us,” said Henry, trembling, and whispering to his son.

Without disclosing to the people of the house who they were, or from whom the letter or the message they inquired for was to have come, they retired, and consulted what steps they were now to pursue.

Previously to writing to the Bishop, the younger Henry's heart, all his inclinations, had swayed him towards a visit to the village in which was his uncle's former country seat—



the beloved village of Anfield; but respect to him, and duty to his father, had made him check those wishes; now they revived again; and with the image of Rebecca before his eyes, he warmly entreated his father to go with him to Anfield, at present only thirty miles distant, and thence write once more—then again wait the will of his uncle.

The father consented to this proposal, even glad to postpone the visit to his dignified brother.

After a scanty repast, such as they had been long inured to, they quitted the inn, and took the road towards Anfield.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

IT was about five in the afternoon of a summer's day, that Henry and his son left the sign of the Mermaid, to pursue their third day's journey : the young man's spirits elated with the prospect of the reception he should meet from Rebecca ; the elder dejected, at not having received a speedy welcome from his brother.

The road which led to Anfield by the shortest course, of necessity took our travellers within sight of the Bishop's palace. The turrets appeared at a distance ; and on the sudden turn round the corner of a large plantation, the whole magnificent structure was at once exhibited before his brother's astonished eyes ; He was struck with the grandeur of the habitation ; and, totally forgetting all the unkind, the contemptuous treatment he had ever received from its owner (like the same Henry in his earlier years), smiled with a kind of transport, "that William was so great a man."

After this first joyous sensation was over, "Let us go a little nearer, my son," said he ; "no one will see us, I hope : or, if they should, you can run and conceal yourself ; and not a creature will know *me* ; even my brother would not know me thus altered ; and I wish to take a little farther view of his fine house, and all his pleasure-grounds."

Young Henry, though impatient to be gone, would not object to his father's desire. They walked forward between



a shady grove and a purling rivulet, snuffed in odours from the jessamine banks, and listened to the melody of an adjoining aviary.

The allurements of the spot seemed to enchain the elder Henry, and he at length sauntered to the very avenue of the dwelling ; but just as he had set his daring yet trembling feet upon the turf which led to the palace gates, he suddenly stopped, on hearing, as he thought, the village clock strike seven ; which reminded him that evening drew on, and it was time to go. He listened again, when he and his son, both together, said, "It is the toll of the bell before some funeral."

The signals of death, while they humble the rich, inspire the poor with pride. The passing bell gave Henry a momentary sense of equality ; and he courageously stepped forward to the first winding of the avenue.

He started back at the sight which presented itself !

A hearse—mourning coaches—mutes—plumed horses—with every other token of the person's importance who was going to be committed to the earth.

Scarcely had his terrified eyes been thus unexpectedly struck, when a coffin borne by six men issued from the gates, and was deposited in the waiting receptacle ; while gentlemen in mourning went into different coaches.

A standard bearer now appeared with an escutcheon, on which the keys and mitre were displayed. Young Henry, upon this, pathetically exclaimed, "My uncle ! it is my uncle's funeral !"

Henry, his father, burst into tears.

The procession moved along.

The two Henrys, the only real mourners in the train, followed at a little distance—in rags, but—in tears.

The elder Henry's heart was nearly bursting : he longed to clasp the dear remains of his brother, without the dread



of being spurned for his presumption. He now could no longer remember him either as the Dean or Bishop ; but, leaping over that whole interval of pride and arrogance, called only to his memory William, such as he knew him when they lived at home together,—together walked to London, and there together—almost perished for want.

They arrived at the church ; and, while the coffin was placing in the dreary vault, the weeping brother crept slowly after to the hideous spot. His reflections now fixed on a different point. “Is this possible?” said he to himself. “Is this the Dean, whom I ever feared? Is this the Bishop, of whom within the present hour I stood in awe? Is this William, whose every glance struck me with his superiority? Alas, my brother ! and is this horrid abode the reward for all your aspiring efforts? Are these sepulchral trappings the only testimonies of your greatness, which you exhibit to me on my return? Did you foresee an end like this, while you treated me, and many more of your youthful companions, with haughtiness and contempt ; while you thought it becoming of your dignity to shun and despise us? Where is the difference now, between my departed wife and you? or, if there be a difference, she, perchance, has the advantage. Ah, my poor brother! for distinction in the other world, I trust, some of your anxious labours have been employed ; for you are now of less importance in this than when you and I first left our native town, and hoped for nothing greater than to be suffered to exist.”

On their quitting the church, they inquired of the bystanders the immediate cause of the Bishop's death, and heard he had been suddenly carried off by a raging fever.

Young Henry inquired “if Lady Clementina was at the palace, or Mr. Norwynne?”

“The latter is there,” he was answered by a poor woman ; “but Lady Clementina has been dead these four years.”



"Dead! dead!" cried young Henry. "That worldly woman! quitted this world for ever!"

"Yes," answered the stranger: "she caught cold by wearing a new-fashioned dress that did not half cover her, wasted all away, and died the miserablest object you ever heard of."

The person who gave this melancholy intelligence concluded it with a hearty laugh; which would have surprised the two hearers, if they had not before observed, that amongst all the village crowd that attended to see this solemn show, not one afflicted countenance appeared, not one dejected look, not one watery eye. The pastor was scarcely known to his flock: it was in London that his meridian lay, at the levee of ministers, at the table of peers, at the drawing-rooms of the great; and now his neglected parishioners paid his indifference in kind.

The ceremony over, and the mourning suite departed, the spectators dispersed with gibes and jeering faces from the sad spot; while the Henrys, with heavy hearts, retraced their steps back towards the palace. In their way, at the crossing of a stile, they met a poor labourer returning from his day's work; who, looking earnestly at the throng of persons who were leaving the churchyard, said to the elder Henry—

"Pray, master, what are all them folk all gathered together about? What's the matter there?"

"There has been a funeral," replied Henry.

"Oh, zooks! what! a burying—ay, now I see it is; and I warrant, of our old Bishop—I heard he was main ill. It is he they have been putting into the ground! is not it?"

"Yes," said Henry.

"Why, then, so much the better."

"The better!" cried Henry.



“Yes, master ; though I should be loath to be where he is now.”

Henry started—“He was your pastor, man !”

“Ha, ha, ha ! I should be sorry that my master’s sheep, that are feeding yonder, should have no better pastor—the fox would soon get them all.”

“You surely did not know him !”

“Not much, I can’t say I did ; for he was above speaking to poor folks, unless they did any mischief—and then he was sure to take notice of them.”

“I believe he meant well,” said Henry.

“As to what he meant, God only knows ; but I know what he *did*.”

“And what did he ?”

“Nothing at all for the poor.”

“If any of them applied to him, no doubt——”

“Oh, they knew better than all that comes to ; for if they asked for anything, he was sure to have them sent to bridewell, or the workhouse. He used to say, ‘*The workhouse was a fine place for a poor man—the food good enough, and enough of it ;*’ yet he kept a dainty table himself. His dogs, too, fared better than we poor. He was vastly tender and good to all his horses and dogs, I *will* say that for him ; and to all brute beasts : he would not suffer them to be either starved or struck—but he had no compassion for his fellow-creatures.”

“I am sensible you do him wrong.”

“That *he* is the best judge of by this time. He has sent many a poor man to the house of correction ; and now ’tis well if he has not got a place there himself. Ha, ha, ha !”

The man was walking away, when Henry called to him, —“Pray can you tell me if the Bishop’s son be at the palace ?”



"Oh, yes! you'll find master there, treading in the old man's shoes, as proud as Lucifer."

"Has he any children?"

"No, thank God! There's been enow of the name; and, after the son is gone, I hope we shall have no more of the breed."

"Is Mrs. Norwynne, the son's wife, at the palace?"

"What, master! did not you know what's become of her?"

"Any accident?"

"Ha, ha, ha! yes. I can't help laughing—why, master, she made a mistake, and went to another man's bed—and so her husband and she were parted—and she has married the other man."

"Indeed!" cried Henry, amazed.

"Ay, indeed; but if it had been my wife, or yours, the Bishop would have made her do penance in a white sheet: but, as it was a lady, why, it was all very well—and any one of us that had been known to talk about it would have been sent to bridewell straight. But we *did* talk, notwithstanding."

The malicious joy with which the peasant told this story made Henry believe (more than all the complaints the man uttered) that there had been want of charity and Christian deportment in the whole conduct of the Bishop's family. He almost wished himself back on his savage island, where brotherly love could not be less than it appeared to be in this civilized country.



## CHAPTER XLV.

As Henry and his son, after parting from the poor labourer, approached the late Bishop's palace, all the charms of its magnificence, its situation, which but a few hours before had captivated the elder Henry's mind, were vanished; and, from the mournful ceremony he had since been witness of, he now viewed this noble edifice but as a heap of rubbish piled together, to fascinate weak understandings and to make even the wise and religious man at times forget why he was sent into this world.

Instead of presenting themselves to their nephew and cousin, they both felt an uncomfortable reluctance to enter under the superb, the melancholy roof. A bank, a hedge, a tree, a hill, seemed, at this juncture, a pleasanter shelter; and each felt himself happy in being a harmless wanderer on the face of the earth, rather than living in splendour, while the wants of the hungry and the naked were crying to Heaven for vengeance.

They gave a heart-felt sigh to the vanity of the rich and the powerful; and pursued a path where they hoped to meet with virtue and happiness.

They arrived at Anfield.

Possessed by apprehensions, which his uncle's funeral had served to increase, young Henry, as he entered the well-known village, feared every sound he heard would convey information of Rebecca's death. He saw the parsonage-house at a distance, but dreaded to approach it, lest Rebecca should no longer be an inhabitant. His father



indulged him in the wish to take a short survey of the village, and rather learn by indirect means—by observation—his fate, than hear it all at once from the lips of some blunt relater.

Anfield had undergone great changes since Henry left it. He found some cottages built where formerly there were none; and some were no more where he had frequently called and held short conversations with the poor who dwelt in them. Amongst the latter number was the house of the parents of Agnes—fallen to the ground! He wondered to himself where that poor family had taken up their abode. Henry! in a kinder world!

He once again cast a look at the old parsonage-house. His inquisitive eye informed him there no alteration had taken place externally; but he feared what change might be within.

At length he obtained the courage to enter the churchyard in his way to it. As he slowly and tremblingly moved along, he stopped to read here and there a grave-stone; as mild, instructive, conveyers of intelligence, to which he could attend with more resignation than to any other reporter.

The second stone he came to he found was erected *To the memory of the Reverend Thomas Rymer*, Rebecca's father. He instantly called to mind all that poor Curate's quick sensibility of wrong towards *himself*: his unbridled rage in consequence; and smiled to think how trivial now appeared all for which he gave way to such excess of passion!

But, shocked at the death of one so near to her he loved, he now feared to read on, and cast his eyes from the tombs accidentally to the church. Through the window of the chancel his sight was struck with a tall monument of large dimensions, raised since his departure, and adorned with the finest sculpture. His curiosity was excited—he drew near,



and could distinguish (followed by elegant poetic praise) "*To the memory of John Lord Viscount Bendham.*"

Notwithstanding the solemn, melancholy, anxious bent of Henry's mind, he could not read these words and behold this costly fabric without indulging a momentary fit of indignant laughter.

"Are sculpture and poetry thus debased," he cried "to perpetuate the memory of a man whose best advantage is to be forgotten; whose no one action merits record, but as an example to be shunned?"

An elderly woman, leaning on her staff, now passed along the lane by the side of the church. The younger Henry accosted her, and ventured to inquire "where the daughters of Mr. Rymer, since his death, were gone to live?"

"We live," she returned, "in that small cottage across the clover-field."

Henry looked again, and thought he had mistaken the word *we*; for he felt assured that he had no knowledge of the person to whom he spoke.

But she knew him, and, after a pause, cried, "Ah, Mr. Henry, you are welcome back. I am heartily glad to see you—and my poor sister Rebecca will go out of her wits with joy."

"Is Rebecca living, and will be glad to see me?" he eagerly asked, while tears of rapture trickled down his face. "Father," he continued, in his ecstasy, "we are now come home to be completely happy; and I feel as if all the years I have been away were but a short week; and as if all the dangers I have passed had been light as air. But is it possible," he cried, to his kind informer, "that you are one of Rebecca's sisters?"

Well might he ask; for, instead of the blooming woman of seven-and-twenty he had left her, her colour was gone, her teeth impaired, her voice broken. She was near fifty.



"Yes, I am one of Mr. Rymer's daughters," she replied.

"But which?" said Henry.

"The eldest, and once called the prettiest," she returned, "though people now tell me I am altered; yet I cannot say I see it myself."

"And are you all living?" Henry inquired.

"All but one. She married and died. The other three, on my father's death, agreed to live together, and knit or spin for our support. So we took that small cottage, and furnished it with some of the parsonage furniture, as you shall see; and kindly welcome I am sure you will be to all it affords, though that is but little."

As she was saying this she led him through the clover-field towards the cottage. His heart rebounded with joy that Rebecca was there; yet, as he walked, he shuddered at the impression which he feared the first sight of her would make. He feared, what he imagined (till he had seen this change in her sister) he should never heed. He feared Rebecca would look no longer young. He was not yet so far master over all his sensual propensities as, when the trial came, to think he could behold her look like her sister and not give some evidence of his disappointment.

His fears were vain. On entering the gate of their little garden, Rebecca rushed from the house to meet them, just the same Rebecca as ever.

It was her mind which, beaming on her face and actuating her every motion, had ever constituted all her charms—it was her mind which had gained her Henry's affection. That mind had undergone no change; and she was the self-same woman he had left her.

He was entranced with joy.



## CHAPTER XLVI.

THE fare which the Henrys partook at the cottage of the female Rymers was such as the sisters had described—mean, and even scanty; but this did not in the least diminish the happiness they received in meeting, for the first time since their arrival in England, human beings who were glad to see them.

At a stinted repast of milk and vegetables, by the glimmering light of a little brushwood on the hearth, they yet could feel themselves comparatively blessed while they listened to the recital of afflictions which had befallen persons around that very neighbourhood, for whom every delicious viand had been procured to gratify the taste, every art devised to delight the other senses.

It was by the side of this glimmering fire that Rebecca and her sisters told the story of poor Agnes's fate, and of the thorn it had for ever planted in William's bosom—of his reported sleepless, perturbed nights, and his gloomy, or half-distracted days; when, in the fulness of *remorse*, he has complained "of a guilty conscience! of the weariness attached to continual prosperity! the misery of wanting an object of affection!"

They told of Lord Bendham's death from the effects of intemperance; from a mass of blood infected by high-seasoned dishes, mixed with copious draughts of wine—repletion of food and liquor, not less fatal to the existence of the rich, than the want of common sustenance to the lives of the poor.



They told of Lady Bendham's ruin, since her Lord's death, by gaming. They told "that now she suffered beyond the pain of common indigence, by the cutting triumph of those whom she formerly despised."

They related (what has been told before) the divorce of William, and the marriage of his wife with a libertine; the decease of Lady Clementina, occasioned by that incorrigible vanity which even old age could not subdue.

After numerous other examples had been recited of the dangers—the evils that riches draw upon their owner, the elder Henry rose from his chair, and, embracing Rebecca and his son, said, "How much indebted are *we* to Providence, my children, who, while it inflicts poverty, bestows peace of mind; and, in return for the trivial grief we meet in this world, holds out to our longing hopes the reward of the next!"

Not only resigned, but happy in their station, with hearts made cheerful rather than dejected by attentive meditation, Henry and his son planned the means of their future support, independent of their kinsman William—nor only of him, but of every person and thing, but their own industry.

"While I have health and strength," cried the old man, and his son's looks acquiesced in all the father said, "I will not take from any one in affluence what only belongs to the widow, the fatherless, and the infirm; for to such alone, by Christian laws—however custom may subvert them—the overplus of the rich is due."



## CHAPTER XLVII.

By forming an humble scheme for their remaining life—a scheme depending upon their *own* exertions alone—on no light promises of pretended friends, and on no sanguine hopes of certain success, but with prudent apprehension, with fortitude against disappointment, Henry, his son, and Rebecca (now his daughter) found themselves, at the end of one year, in the enjoyment of every comfort which such distinguished minds know how to taste.

Exempt both from patronage and from control, healthy, alive to every fruition with which nature blesses the world, dead to all out of their power to attain—the works of art, susceptible of those passions which endear human creatures one to another, insensible to those which separate man from man, they found themselves the thankful inhabitants of a small house or hut, placed on the borders of the sea.

Each morning wakes the father and the son to cheerful labour in fishing, or the tending of a garden, the produce of which they carry to the next market town. The evening sends them back to their home in joy, where Rebecca meets them at the door, affectionately boasts of the warm meal that is ready, and heightens the charm of conversation with her taste and judgment.

It was after a supper of roots from their garden, poultry



that Rebecca's hand had reared, and a jug brewed by young Henry, that the following discourse took place:—

"My son," said the elder Henry, "where, under heaven, shall three persons be met together happy as we three are? It is the want of industry, or the want of reflection, which makes the poor dissatisfied. Labour gives a value to rest which the idle can never taste; and reflection gives to the mind a degree of content which the unthinking never can know."

"I once," replied the younger Henry, "considered poverty a curse; but after my thoughts became enlarged, and I had associated for years with the rich, and now mix with the poor, my opinion has undergone a total change—for I have seen, and have enjoyed, more real pleasure at work with my fellow-labourers, and in this cottage, than ever I beheld, or experienced, during my abode at my uncle's; during all my intercourse with the fashionable and the powerful of this world."

"The worst is," said Rebecca, "the poor have not always enough."

"Who has enough?" asked her husband. "Had my uncle? No; he hoped for more, and in all his writings sacrificed his duty to his avarice. Had his son enough, when he yielded up his honour, his domestic peace, to gratify his ambition? Had Lady Bendham enough, when she staked all she had, in the hope of becoming richer? Were we, my Rebecca, of discontented minds, we have now too little; but, conscious from observation and experience that the rich are not so happy as ourselves, we rejoice in our lot."

The tear of joy which stole from her eye expressed, more than his words,—a state of happiness.

He continued:—"I remember, when I first came a boy to England, the poor excited my compassion; but now that my



judgment is matured, I pity the rich. I know that in this opulent kingdom there are nearly as many persons perishing through intemperance as starving with hunger; there are as many miserable in the lassitude of having nothing to do as there are of those bowed down to the earth with hard labour; there are more persons who draw upon themselves calamity by following their own will than there are who experience it by obeying the will of another. Add to this that the rich are so much afraid of dying, they have no comfort in living."

"There the poor have another advantage," said Rebecca; "for they may defy not only death, but every loss by sea or land, as they have nothing to lose."

"Besides," added the elder Henry, "there is a certain joy, of the most gratifying kind that the human mind is capable of tasting, peculiar to the poor, and of which the rich can but seldom experience the delight."

"What can that be?" cried Rebecca.

"A kind word, a benevolent smile, one token of esteem from the person whom we consider as our superior."

To which Rebecca replied, "And the rarity of obtaining such a token is what increases the honour."

"Certainly," returned young Henry; "and yet those in poverty, ungrateful as they are, murmur against that government from which they receive the blessing."

"But this is the fault of education—of early prejudice," said the elder Henry. "Our children observe us pay respect, even reverence, to the wealthy, while we slight or despise the poor. The impression thus made on their minds in youth is indelible during the more advanced periods of life; and they continue to pine after riches, and lament under poverty. Nor is the seeming folly wholly destitute of reason; for human beings are not yet so deeply sunk in voluptuous gratification, or childish vanity, as to place



delight in any attainment which has not for its end the love or admiration of their fellow-beings."

"Let the poor, then," cried the younger Henry, "no more be their own persecutors—no longer pay homage to wealth—instantaneously the whole idolatrous worship will cease—the idol will be broken."

THE END.







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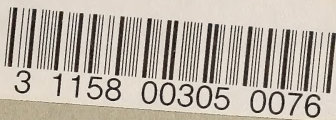
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